A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition

A series of handbooks and reference works on the intellectual and religious life of Europe, 500–1700

Editor-in-chief
Christopher M. Bellitto
(Kean University)

VOLUME 25

A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux

Edited by

Brian Patrick McGuire



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2011

The front cover shows a nimbed Bernard with crozier and book, from a manuscript of the collection of saints' lives, the *Legenda Aurea*, made for the Dominican nuns of the Holy Cross in Regensburg c. 1267–76, now Keble MS 49, fol. 162r.

With kind permission of the Warden and Fellows of Keble College, Oxford.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to Bernard of Clairvaux / edited by Brian Patrick McGuire.
p. cm. — (Brill's companions to the Christian tradition)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-20139-2 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Bernard, of Clairvaux, Saint, 1090 or 91-1153. I. McGuire, Brian Patrick. II. Title. III. Series.

BX4700.B5C56 2011
271'.1202—dc22

20100516930

ISSN 1871-6377
ISBN 978 90 04 20139 2

Copyright 2011 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Hotei Publishing,
IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

Dedicated to Chrysogonus Waddell,
Cistercian Monk and Scholar
(1930–2008)

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ix
List of Abbreviations xiii
List of Contributors xv

Introduction: A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux 1

Bernard's Life and Works: A Review 18
Brian Patrick McGuire

Reading Saint Bernard: The Man, the Medium, the Message 62
Michael Casey, OCSO

Bernard and William of Saint Thierry 108
E. Rozanne Elder

Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard 133
Constant J. Mews

Bernard as a Father Abbot 169
Christopher Holdsworth

Bernard the Writer 220
M.B. Pranger

Bernard of Clairvaux and the Landscape of Salvation 249
Mette B. Bruun

Bernard of Clairvaux and Christian Art 279
Diane J. Reilly

The Heritage of Saint Bernard in Medieval Art 305
James France

An Old Man's Tale: My many years with Saint Bernard of Clairvaux 347
Chrysogonus Waddell, OCSO

Afterword: Looking Back at Bernard 369
John R. Sommerfeldt

Bibliography 375
Index 391

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When Brill's editor Julian Deahl some years ago asked if I might be interested in editing a Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux, I was very much in doubt. In previously editing a Companion to Jean Gerson I had a handful of colleagues who were experts in the late medieval theologian. With Bernard there was a potential army of scholars, as well as an armful of scholarship reaching back into the nineteenth century. Gerson deserved to be discovered, while Bernard was already known, for better and worse, as "the difficult saint," "the first European" and an arch-demon of "the persecuting society".

It was with fear and trembling that I approached Bernard, and I am still convinced that in my own work, I have not even begun to do him justice. His Latin style, contemplative dimension, political importance in twelfth-century Europe, contribution to the Cistercian Order, views on art and architecture, and continuing relevance in the centuries after his death: all these aspects of Bernard deserve to be addressed. Thankfully I was able to find colleagues and friends who were willing to do so, and I am grateful to them for joining me in this project.

I am most of all grateful to Chrysogonus Waddell, OCSO (Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance = Trappists), to whom this book is dedicated. As monk of Gethsemani Abbey, he was taught by the legendary Thomas Merton. I never knew Merton but I came to know Chrysogonus as the enthusiastic and attentive brother who would sit through every single Cistercian session at the yearly Kalamazoo Congress. He almost always had a helpful and enlightening question to pose, even when he was not happy with the speaker. Thanks to Chrysogonus the works of Bernard were sent to me free of charge. He somehow knew that I was not well off, and over the years the fruits of his Cistercian scholarship faithfully came my way. I am only one of dozens or even hundreds of scholars who have benefited from his expertise and insights, and so it was a relief to receive the final draft of his own article just weeks before his death in November 2008. Now I can share with the readers of this book the last thoughts of Chrysogonus on Merton and Saint Bernard.

I am also grateful to John R. Sommerfeldt, whose contribution rounds out this book in an intensely personal yet also scholarly manner. As

professor of history at Western Michigan University John in the 1960 initiated the meetings that turned into the Medieval Congress which now year after year attracts thousands of scholars. He also started the Cistercian Studies Conference, which takes place at Kalamazoo as part of the Medieval Congress. John's brief but important article tells of the development of a scholar of Saint Bernard. He still comes to Kalamazoo and continues to contribute to its unique meeting of monks, nuns, and lay scholars who seek the meaning of Cistercian and monastic life and spirituality in an historical context. Here Bernard of Clairvaux lives on, as I hope he also does in this book.

E. Rozanne Elder became the director of the Institute for Cistercian Studies at Kalamazoo in 1973. She has been behind the Cistercian Studies Conference, and until recently was also editorial director of Cistercian Publications. Rozanne was present and welcoming in 1978, the first time I came to the Conference, and I have seen her time and again make scholars, lay and monastic, from every continent, at home in Kalamazoo. Her contribution to this volume summarizes work on William of Saint Thierry and Bernard that began with her doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto.

The other scholars who contribute to this volume speak on their own behalf: Michael Casey, Cistercian-Trappist monk of Australia, whose seminal writings on Bernard and monastic spirituality are known all over the world; Constant J. Mews, also of Australia, whose brilliant work on Abelard has renewed our understanding of the man and who now offers a reappraisal of Bernard and Abelard; Christopher Holdsworth of Exeter, England, who for decades has been publishing important new studies on Bernard's life and writings and here brings some of this work together in a new synthesis; Burcht Pranger of the Netherlands, who has called attention to the rhetoric and literary dimension of Bernard's writings and calls me to order for claiming that we can use these sources for knowing about Bernard's inner life. Mette Bruun of Denmark also reviews Bernard's language, mainly in terms of symbols and images. In a new chair of church history at the Faculty of Theology, Copenhagen University, she is making it possible for Lutheran candidates for the priesthood to consider their medieval heritage.

Diane Reilly of Indiana University has taken on the thankless task of reviewing scholarship on Bernard and art. Her article is clear and concise and locates Bernard in the midst of twelfth-century discussions on how to use art in religious life. My friend James France of Oxfordshire is not always in agreement with her and has his own understanding of

Bernard and art. But James makes clear how Bernard was conceived in his *Nachleben*. As editor, I make no attempt to reconcile different points of view; I only insist that the scholars who gave their work to this volume are the brightest and the best that I could find!

I am grateful to the Brill editors for supporting the idea of this volume, especially to Julian Deahl, another Kalamazoo regular who sits for days at a time in his booth talking with potential contributors to Brill volumes. I am thankful for good conversations with him and for his promptness in responding to queries, in spite of an immense work load, and also to Ivo Romein, who has been Brill house editor for this volume.

The outside reader, Tyler Sergent of Marshall University, West Virginia, contributed his recommendation and good suggestions. The copy editor, Juleen Eichinger of Tucson, Arizona, caught many a lapse on my part and has made the stylistic practices of the different articles more consistent. Finally I am grateful to several of the contributors to this volume for their help in compiling what must be the most comprehensive bibliography of bernardian studies to date. Here I am especially beholden to my dear Cistercian friend and Kalamazoo editor, E. Rozanne Elder.

Kalundborg, Denmark
20 August 2010
The Solemnity of Saint Bernard

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	*Analecta Cisterciensia* (*Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* until 1964; *Analecta Cisterciensia* since 1965)
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM) (Turnhout, 1966–)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
Cîteaux	*Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* (*Cîteaux in de Nederlanden* 1950–58; since 1959 *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses*)
CSQ	*Cistercian Studies Quarterly* (*Cistercian Studies* 1966–90; *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* since 1991)
Ep	*Epistola*
Letters	Bruno Scott James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (Chicago, 1953; repr. Kalamazoo, 1998)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
NLTC	*Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*. Ed. Chrysogonus Waddell. Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses, 1999
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (Bible)
OSB	*Opere di san Bernardo*. Ed. Ferruccio Gastaldelli. Milan, 1984–
PL	J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina*, 222 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
SC	*Sermo super Cantica Canticorum*
SChr	Sources chrétiennes (Lyon, 1943–)
SBO	*Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77)
VP	*Vita Prima*

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Mette Birkedal Bruun (Ph.D., Aarhus, 2000) is Professor of Church History at the University of Copenhagen. Her research interests centre on the relation between space and text and the hermeneutics of reform. She has published *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Brill, 2007) as well as articles on Bernardine and seventeenth-century Cistercian texts and co-edited anthologies on cultural history, including *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages* (Brepols, 2008). She is currently working on Rancé and editing the Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order.

Father Michael Casey, ocso is a monk of Tarrawarra Abbey Australia. After ordination he completed an MA and STL at Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven (1973) and, in 1980, was awarded a DTheol from Melbourne College of Divinity for his thesis on Bernard's teaching on desire for God, later published as *Athirst for God*. Since that time he has published a dozen books and more than a hundred articles on different aspects of monastic and Cistercian history and spirituality; his works have been translated into ten languages. He is a frequent speaker and teacher in all continents. His most recent article has been "An Introduction to Aelred's Chapter Discourses." (CSQ 45, 2010: 279–314)

E. Rozanne Elder received her Ph.D. at the Centre for Mediaeval Studies at the University of Toronto and is now Professor of History and Director of the Centre for Cistercian and Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University. From 1973 until 2008 she was the editorial director of Cistercian Publications, where she edited dozens of monographs and collections of articles that today provide invaluable guides in monastic studies. Her published work includes articles on the theology of the early Cistercians, particularly that of William of Saint Thierry.

James France holds an MA from Oxford University and a PhD from Roskilde University, Denmark. He is the author of *The Cistercians in Scandinavia* (Kalamazoo, 1990), *The Cistercians in Medieval Art* (Kalamazoo, 1998), and *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*

(Kalamazoo, 2007). He is currently researching Cistercian lay brothers to be published by Cistercian Publications as *Separate But Equal; Cistercian Laybrothers 1120–1300*. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

Christopher Holdsworth (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1960) Emeritus Professor of Medieval History, University of Exeter. His main book-length work is *Rufford Charters*, 4 volumes (Thoroton Society Record Series, Nottingham, 1972. 74, 80, 81). He has published over sixty articles and chapters in books. mainly monastic, especially Cistercian, history, centred on Bernard of Clairvaux, recently 'The Affiliation of Savigny', in *Truth as Gift: Studies in Honor of John R. Sommerfeldt*, ed. Marsha Dutton, David M. LaCorte, and Paul Lockey, Kalamazoo, MI, 2004, 43–88: 'Reading the Signs: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Miracles' in *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250. Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton, Woodbridge, 2006, pp. 161–172.

Brian Patrick McGuire (D.Phil. Oxford, 1971) is professor of medieval history at Roskilde University in Denmark. He has been working on Bernard of Clairvaux since he began in the 1980s to investigate the early Cistercian tradition of *exemplum* literature. His books include: *The Cistercians in Denmark* (1982); *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience* (1988, reprinted with a new chapter, 2010); *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (1991); *Brother and Lover: Aelred of Rievaulx* (1994); *Jean Gerson. Early Works* (1998); *Jean Gerson and the Last Reformation* (2005). In 2006 he edited *A Companion to Jean Gerson*. He has also published several books in Danish, including one on the Christianization of the Danes (2008) and is presently completing a study of medieval prayer.

Constant J. Mews (D.Phil., Medieval History, Oxford University, 1980) is currently Director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology, within the School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies, Monash University, Australia. While his principal publications have related to the life and thought of Peter Abelard (*The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard. Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France*, 2nd edn, 2008; *Abelard and Heloise*, 2005), he has also written about his interaction with Bernard of Clairvaux, as in

'The Council of Sens (1141): Bernard, Abelard and the Fear of Social Upheaval', *Speculum* 77 (2002): 342–382.

Burcht Pranger studied theology and medieval Latin and philosophy at the universities of Amsterdam, Toronto and Oxford. In 1975 he received his Ph.D. at the University of Amsterdam. From 1971 until his retirement in 2010 he taught Medieval Latin and the History of Christianity at the University of Amsterdam. He has published widely on medieval, monastic literature, in particular Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux (*Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought,* 1994, *The Artificiality of Christianity: Essays on the Poetics of Monasticism*, 2003). His latest book is *Eternity's Ennui, Temporality, Perseverance and Voice in Augustine and Western Literature*, 2010).

Diane J. Reilly (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1999) is Associate Professor of Art History at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her research focuses on the function of the book in medieval society, the use of manuscripts for religious and political reform, and the development of biblical illustration, particularly in England and France. Her first book, *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vannes and the Saint-Vaast Bible*, was published by Brill in 2006. With Susan Boynton, she has coedited *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception and Performance in Western Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 2011). She is currently writing a book on the earliest Cistercian manuscript illuminations.

John Sommerfeldt is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Dallas. As the first director of the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University, he founded the International Medieval Congress. He is the author or editor of twenty-nine books, the latest being *Christianity in Culture: A Historical Quest* (2009). He has served as the Executive Director of the Institute of Cistercian Studies and Director of the Center for Contemplative Studies at Western Michigan University, and as President of the University of Dallas. He and his wife reside in Irving, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

Chrysogonus Waddell (1930–2008) entered the Trappist-Cistercian abbey of Gethsemani in 1950 and in 1962 was sent to study theology at the San Anselmo monastic college in Rome. He was an accomplished

musician and used this talent in investigating the liturgical development of the Cistercian Order. His studies of the Order's origins brought him to libraries and manuscript collections in both North America and Europe, and his *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (1999) is a landmark publication. Also outstanding are *Cistercian* Lay Brothers. Twelfth-Century *Usages with Related Texts* (2000); *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter* (2002); The *Primitive Cistercian Breviary* (2007).

INTRODUCTION: A COMPANION TO BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Many medieval figures are better known today than they were in their own time. This is the case for Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx and author of works on friendship, as well as for Christina of Markyate, a visionary who is with us today thanks to a single damaged manuscript and a controversial Psalter. With Bernard of Clairvaux, however, we meet a figure of European significance who was celebrated, or detested, in his own time and who has been making waves ever since. Ever since the 12th century, scholars and monastic people have turned to Bernard's writings in pursuit of what might be called the treasury of Western spiritual wisdom. Today, more than nine centuries after his birth, Bernard is generally revered by men and women in the extant two Cistercian Orders (O.Cist, the Regular Cistercians, and O.C.S.O., the Trappist-Cistercians). In academic literature, however, he still is often used as a foil to Abelard, who plays the good guy of logic and enlightenment, while Bernard comes across as a dark and dangerous figure representing all that the modern world of the West has left behind.

Bernard is controversial. Bernard is not easy to read or to understand. Bernard cannot be reduced to simple statements. All these assertions will hopefully be explained and justified in the coming pages, where it has been my duty and privilege as editor to gather together outstanding scholars who devote all or part of their research to aspects of Bernard's life and thought. I make no claim that I have in any way provided a complete guide to Bernard scholarship today, for aside from Denmark and the Netherlands, I do not include contributions from the European continent, to say nothing of the rest of the world outside of North America and Australia. The Companion series, however, is not intended to provide an exhaustive overview of research on a medieval author but to be an introduction and guide to that author.

In selecting contributors I have sought to provide the reader with some of the main themes relevant to Bernard: the events of his life, the contents of his writings, his relationship to his friends and his enemies, his view of art, and ways in which he was remembered after his death. It is my hope as editor that the reader can dip into some of these articles when he or she is in need of assistance to navigate through the

maze of Bernard's writings or when expert advice is required to correct or adjust some of the assertions made on Bernard's behalf—such as the statement that he was the "founder" of the Cistercian Order (he definitely was not) or that he was afraid of scientific enquiry (he was not!).

I first worked with Bernard in the late 1960s when I was a doctoral student at Balliol College, Oxford. My thesis was devoted to the history of Saint Anselm's theology of the redemption in the 12th and 13th centuries. I had to get through Bernard's long and difficult Letter 190, where he attacks Peter Abelard. Here Bernard asserts that Abelard, in explaining the Redemption as solely a demonstration of God's love for us, denied the aspect of atonement for sin. A careful analysis of Bernard's language led me to the conclusion that he probably had read or at least was aware of the main arguments in Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*. Here Anselm explained the Redemption in terms of the satisfaction that can only be provided to God by a God-man.

I never went further with this study after I completed the doctorate, even though my supervisor, Sir Richard Southern, in 1975 encouraged me to write a new biography of Bernard. As he pointed out at the time and as Michael Casey also makes clear in his article in this volume, the best biography was published back in 1895 by Elphège Vacandard and has never been equaled. We all await the "definitive" biography of Saint Bernard, but it eludes us, perhaps because no scholar in the last 100 years has been able to combine Vacandard's command of detail with an equally attractive and readable style. It can be said, of course, that the number of studies on Bernard, especially in the last decades, has multiplied beyond number, and so any one scholar would not be able to have the command of the material that Vacandard in the 1890s mastered. The reader gets entangled in details of discussions about dates and the credibility of the sources, as can be seen by some of the articles in this collection. They are far lengthier than they were supposed to be, but as editor I have had to give them my blessing, for their contents are justified in view of the facts now known and the scholarly discussions that have taken place in the last decades, especially at the Cistercian Studies Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a beacon of Bernard scholarship since the 1960s.

In my own article for this collection I take on the seemingly simple task of reviewing the contents of Bernard's life and works. Here, however, I find that almost every date can be challenged, and my attempt to take a shortcut with the help of a seemingly helpful Italian chronology of Bernard ended in bringing me to several dead ends. The dates

given are often not so evident in the primary sources but have simply become traditional markers for Bernard. Instead of throwing up my arms in frustration at the gap between what we think we know and what we really know about Bernard, I choose to emphasize what can be said about Bernard. Certainly he is better known to us than almost any other medieval figure: we can follow him from youth in making his choice to become a monk and in his founding of Clairvaux. In the 1120s came his first public involvement in the affairs of the Cistercian Order. The 1130s were a time of travel around France and Italy in order to deal with the papal schism. The 1140s provided Bernard with a European platform in being involved in ecclesiastical controversies and political affairs in many lands and also brought him to the centre of the crusading movement. The failure of the Second Crusade left Bernard chastened and more prone to stay at Clairvaux in the last five years of his life until his death in 1153, but he still frequently wrote his pope and unwilling protégé, Eugenius III, and tried to get him to act as Bernard thought best.

Throughout his adult life Bernard was writing—or dictating—his letters and other works, and these repay close attention. The first collection of his letters was gathered together by his faithful secretary and hagiographer, Geoffrey of Auxerre, who showed an acute awareness of Bernard's contribution to monastic culture by placing at the head of the collection the abbot's letter to his wayward relative, Robert. In this letter appear many aspects of Bernard's personality and literary genius, in his efforts to persuade the youth to return to Clairvaux. The letters together with the 86 Sermons on the Song of Songs, preached to the monks over a period of three decades, provide perhaps the greatest monument of what can be called Bernardine spirituality, his conviction that in the monastic life and especially through *lectio*, the meditative reading of texts, especially from the Bible, one can reach out for the presence of God. This process takes place best within a monastery, where other monks (or nuns) provide a necessary support group. Bernard believed in this way of life and for some years lived it himself, as can be seen in his early work, *The Steps of Pride and Humility*, a brilliant commentary and addition to the Rule of Saint Benedict.

My review of Bernard's life and works turned out to be far longer than it was supposed to be, but it is impossible to do justice to the man and his writings without going into detail. The overview I provide is greatly enhanced and deepened by Michael Casey's "Reading Saint Bernard: The Man, the Medium, the Message." As a Trappist-Cistercian

monk of Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia, Casey has for decades been reading Bernard and teaching him to monks and nuns all over the world. If anyone is qualified to write a biography of Bernard to replace Vacandard, it is Casey, whose doctoral dissertation, later made available by Cistercian Publications, goes to the heart of the language and structure of Bernard's Sermons on the Song of Songs. Considering "The Man," Casey looks at humour, a subject rarely associated with the man I once called "the difficult saint." He sees in Bernard self-deprecation, awareness of limits, and even admission of mistakes. Casey sometimes sees these qualities through Geoffrey of Auxerre, whose hagiographical writings turn out to be remarkably helpful in understanding Bernard. Thus the usual warning that hagiography is not history just does not work when one is dealing with Bernard: we can learn a great deal about him through a source that was intended to contribute to his canonization.

The aspect of "The Man" that deserves special attention is Bernard in terms of "Collaboration." Casey points out how "Bernard is often regarded as a man of solitary brilliance," but in point of fact he could work well with others in the Cistercian Order, as in the reform of the chant. Casey goes so far as to see Bernard in terms of "Appreciation of Others" and analyses his sermon on the death of abbot Herbert of Igny, with whom Bernard had had problems. Better known is Bernard's appreciation of his brother Gerard, as expressed in Sermon 26 On the Song of Songs. The exact understanding of this tribute has been discussed by many scholars, and we will meet a much different evaluation in Burcht Pranger's article.

Casey's final category for Bernard the Man is "Personal Attraction," especially as seen in what Isaac of Stella remembered about him. Casey's talent for drawing on sources both from Bernard himself and from those in his circles enables him to provide a rich portrait of him as "The Man." In terms of "The Medium" he goes to the heart of the problem many have with Bernard: "Many new readers find Bernard's particular style an obstacle to appreciation." Casey considers Bernard's Latin as well as his use of literary genres that may be foreign to us, and he points out that the Cistercians were most devoted to the *sermo*, which does not mean sermon in terms of a preacher in a pulpit. The monks listened to conferences or short discourses, especially in the chapter room, as they still do today. These talks were not careful expositions of biblical passages but "free-ranging reflections drawn from the whole Bible combined with readings from 'the book of experience.' " Casey calls such *sermons* "liturgical discourses."

Bernard the preacher was so outstanding that his abilities were remembered almost two centuries later in Robert of Basevorn's *The Form of Preaching*, a treatise mentioned in Pranger's article. Michael Casey summarizes brilliantly the qualities of the monastic theology that emerges in Bernard's writings, and especially his discourses. He then turns to "The Message" that Bernard was conveying: desire for God, reform and discipline in the Church, and love. The monastery becomes a *schola dilectionis*, and here the virtues are practiced—or vices grow, as in Bernard's warnings in his *Steps of Humility and Pride*. Ideally life in a monastery with a loving community and under a wise abbot can make possible the kind of contemplation which Casey describes in the last pages of his article. But instead of ending amid such lofty heights, he returns to his reader and provides a conclusion on "where to begin" in reading Bernard. His advice reminds the reader that for Michael Casey, Bernard's life and thought is more than an academic exercise. Some readers may dislike the monk scholar's commitment, but in my mind Casey is a worthy inheritor and interpreter of the Cistercian and especially the Bernardine tradition.

Another veteran of Cistercian scholarship, E. Rozanne Elder of Western Michigan University, looks at Bernard through the eyes of his friend and hagiographer William of Saint Thierry. If there are many uncertainties in Bernard's life, there are practically no sure dates at all in William's. It is much disputed, for example, when he actually met Bernard. But there is no doubt that this encounter changed his life and drew William to Clairvaux. Many questions remain: why did he not become a monk there, and why did he leave his post as abbot of a Benedictine house to become a monk of Cistercian Signy? Professor Elder goes through all the evidence and shows how frustratingly incomplete much of it is, but she draws a portrait of a friendship that was full of tensions. Bernard the saint of the *Vita prima* had questionable eating habits, and in William's later writings at Signy he complained about how "in the wilderness palaces are being erected," surely a swipe at the elaborate new buildings at Clairvaux.

Elder devotes a welcome section to "Bernard and William as Friends," but she also considers them "As Allies in Monastic Reform." She compares the two as writers and looks at the *Meditations* written at Signy. William is known mainly through his contribution to the *Vita prima*, while Elder, with a total grasp of his writings, can show how he has emerged in the last decades as one of the leading monastic theologians of the 12th century. But Elder never forgets that her task in this article is to show the bonds, both emotional and intellectual, between William

and Bernard. It was William who warned Bernard of the errors of Abelard. But his "masterpiece" was *The Golden Epistle*, William's brief but cogent treatise on the eremitical life written for the novice master of a Carthusian monastery.

This work, together with earlier ones, allows Elder at the end of her article to compare "the spirituality of William and Bernard." Here the reader is presented with a contrast between Bernard's concentration on Christ and William's focus on the Holy Spirit. In such a contrast Elder can demonstrate how "Bernard had a poetic and gregarious nature; he loved words and enjoyed the company of like-minded persons. William had a speculative and single-minded nature; he sought solitude and he used words carefully…" New studies, such as a recent PhD thesis by Tyler Sergent of Marshall University, will add further dimensions to such considerations.

Rozanne Elder's article on Bernard and William provides a jumping off point for the dizzying prospect of Bernard's conflict with the man against whom William warned him. Constant J. Mews, one of the foremost authorities on Abelard, shows the way in his "Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard." All the clichés about Bernard as representing "the repressive force of religion" are put to rest in a carefully argued and exciting overview of a difficult and controversial subject. Constant Mews starts with Bernard and Abelard in their relations to William of Champeaux, the Paris teacher whom Abelard challenged. The article also points to a central role played by royal chancellor and archdeacon of Paris Stephen de Garlande. Bernard's closeness to William of Champeaux is attested by William of Saint Thierry. Like William of Champeaux, Bernard was caught up "in the power of language to persuade and in applying the skills of rhetoric to preaching and exegesis." Thus Mews shows how Bernard was shaped by "a sophisticated schoolman, who became in later life increasingly sympathetic to the experience of reformed monasticism, as lived out at Clairvaux."

Mews traces Abelard's story through the *Historia calamitatum* and points out that one of the abbots at Soissons in 1121, where his Trinitarian theology was condemned, was none other than William of Saint Thierry, who in 1140 would report on Abelard to Bernard. The abbot of Clairvaux and Abelard were regularly lining up in opposition to each other, but Mews also points out that there were similarities, as between the early community Abelard created at the Paraclete and what we find at Clairvaux: "In both cases, the ideal was to create an

authentic ascetic community in which its members lived out their formal ideals…"

Through Hugh of Saint Victor and Suger we find other aspects of Bernard's activity that led him to confrontation with Abelard. But as Mews points out, the Paraclete under Heloise came to provide a point of indirect contact between Bernard and Abelard. Bernard may have been critical of how the nuns prayed the "Our Father," but at least here he revealed involvement in a house of nuns and its liturgy. Abelard would have preferred him to keep a distance, but the Paraclete provides us with an earlier form of the Cistercian liturgy. Here we have a meeting, however involuntary, between Bernard, with his Cistercian concerns, and Abelard, who provided many of the Paraclete's hymns and prayers.

The Paraclete warns us against simplifying the relationship between Bernard and Abelard into pure enmity, but in the 1130s tensions worsened. Mews describes a spectacular murder which poisoned the atmosphere in Paris. In this decade Abelard worked on a new version of his *Theologia*, a word that Bernard would ridicule. But as Mews points out, theology at the time was advancing "by way of measured arguments *pro* and *contra*" for any question. This new scholastic method would become the foundation of Western intellectual discourse, but William of Saint Thierry claimed that it could not be rightly used in order to understand the workings of the Trinity. And so we have the disaster (for Abelard) of the Council of Sens, which Mews (as well as others) has redated to 1141. Bernard was alarmed because he realized that Abelard had sympathizers at the papal curia. He used his rhetorical arsenal to cast mud on Abelard and his followers.

For us moderns it seems hard to accept that Peter never got a chance to defend himself. In Bernard's famous and infamous Letter 190, Abelard on the Trinity and the Redemption is reduced to an archheretic. Constant Mews shows how in a later version of his *Theologia*, Abelard responded to Bernard and tried to make his vocabulary more stringent.

The result of the condemnation of Sens was not that Abelard's writings were burned, as Pope Innocent II initially decided. We all know that Peter was allowed to die a pious monk at Cluny, for we have the magnificent letter of Abbot Peter the Venerable to Heloise about Abelard's last days. As Mews points out at the end of his splendid article, Bernard "did not have a monopoly on the religious culture of monasticism." But at the same time Abelard lacked "a monopoly

on the range of theological ideas being discussed within the schools." Whatever Bernard was trying to do with Abelard, it would not be possible to stop the debates going on at what would become the University of Paris. In this tension, however, Bernard is not the villain, nor does he represent the past. His meditative and affective theology is different from Abelard's analytical and logical orientation, but both theologies would continue to enrich the spiritual and intellectual life of the West.

Moving from Bernard in his relations with the outside world, Christopher Holdsworth turns to Bernard within the Cistercian and larger monastic world. One should think that a study of "Bernard as a father abbot" would have been written long ago, but to the best of my knowledge Holdsworth is a pioneer in showing in such detail how Bernard dealt with other Cistercian and monastic houses. Earlier studies, such as the Bernard biography by Watkin Williams (1935), contain much the same material, but in an undigested and more descriptive manner. Holdsworth wants to understand Bernard the abbot, and in doing so he has a complicated and long story to tell. As editor I gave him my blessing to far exceed the word limit on articles, since I had already done so in my own. Over the years I have witnessed the solid and insightful contributions that Holdsworth has made on Cistercian topics, and especially concerning Bernard. Here, I am glad to say, he has drawn on a lifetime of reading Bernard and looking at him in the context of monastic life in the 12th century.

Looking at the letters, Holdsworth finds 31 of them dealing with recruitment: Bernard tried to convince men living in other forms of the Benedictine tradition to choose its manifestation among the Cistercians. There are four letters alone for possible entrants to Clairvaux from England, and Holdsworth surmises that Bernard's first secretary, William, who became the first abbot of Rievaulx, was probably the cause of contacts between recruits and Bernard. The abbot of Clairvaux emerges in a less than favorable light in a letter where he criticized the parents of a monk Elias for trying to get him to come back home. Bernard wrote in the *persona* of Elias, who called them "not my parents, but my enemies." As Holdsworth points out, some modern readers believe that Bernard did not write the letter; it would have been drawn up by a secretary in his name. But I beg to differ: the insistence and resolve resemble very much the Bernard who emerges from several of the articles in this volume.

The second category under recruitment covers monks or canons who tried to exchange their community for that of Clairvaux, and here we find the famous letter to Robert, usually dated to 1125. Strangely enough, most letters about recruitment were written before 1131, perhaps an indication of how Bernard's concerns changed once he got involved in the papal schism. In any case Holdsworth provides an excellent analysis of the letter to Robert, especially in terms of the effect it seems to have had. Some of the other recruitment letters reveal Bernard as having been, in Holdsworth's words, "somewhat economical with the truth." Later he characterizes Bernard's reasoning as "logic-chopping." Perhaps Bernard was moving towards what eventually would become his firm point of view: that it was acceptable to move from a less strict to a more strict monastery ("for the sake of greater perfection of a stricter form of life"), but it was not permissible to do the opposite!

At times Holdsworth finds Bernard actually admitting he has made a mistake and asking pardon from another abbot. Such protestations Holdsworth reads quite literally as reflecting Bernard's genuine feelings. All Bernard research constantly asks the question of how to interpret the ways in which he conveyed himself, but Holdsworth takes a clear stand: "It is hard to know how literally one should read this passage, but it surely shows a Bernard with guilty feelings about what he had done…"

The final section on letters dealing with recruitment covers six letters from Bernard in which he returned monks to their original monasteries. In the earliest letter, from the 1120s, he informed the abbot of Foigny, Rainard, that he could not receive a young man as a novice at Clairvaux and so was sending him to Foigny. Holdsworth speculates about possible explanations for Bernard's assumption that he had the right to send a candidate at Clairvaux to another monastery, and he looks at the Cistercian legislation for an explanation. Here as elsewhere Holdsworth sees Bernard as involved in the development of the Cistercian Order. In contrast to Constance Berman, who has claimed that the Cistercian Order did not exist until after about 1150, Holdsworth sees in Bernard's letters references to and uses of what was becoming the fixed structure of the Order.

Turning to "patrons and benefactors," Holdsworth mines the letters for Bernard's contacts with lay persons who could strengthen Cistercian foundations. The earliest letter, to King Henry I of England, plays with

the idea of kingship and war, with almost no biblical language, while one to the bishop of Geneva is squarely centred on allusions or quotations from the Bible. Bernard could also criticize a count for asking too high a rent from a Cistercian house. We find him also selling a mill, an indication of an early Cistercian desire not to get involved in economic activities that brought the monks into contact with the lay world.

Not surprisingly several of Bernard's letters deal with new foundations, and we can here best follow Bernard in his dealings with King Roger of Sicily and Archbishop Malachy of Armagh. Roger needed Bernard after his defeat in a battle in 1137, while Malachy sought out Bernard in a visit to Clairvaux in 1140 and a request that Clairvaux send monks to Ireland. The result was a great success, with a daughter house at Mellifont north of Dublin, while Mellifont itself produced daughters. In such letters one gets a sense of the dynamism and speed with which the Cistercian Order spread across western Europe and down to Sicily. Holdsworth might also have mentioned the way Scandinavia also received the new monasticism, with houses in Sweden and Denmark and what may have been the beginnings of a friendship between Archbishop Eskil of Lund and Bernard.

Besides new foundations there were also houses affiliated with the Cistercians and cultivated by Bernard. Aulps near Geneva, founded by Robert of Molesme, who later founded Cîteaux, was visited by Bernard in 1135. Afterwards he wrote the abbot and praised the changes he was making, presumably at Bernard's encouragement, for example, closing off the monastery to women.

Turning to Bernard's "Other Responsibilities as Father Abbot," Holdsworth considers his involvements in the elections of abbots. Humbert, abbot of Igny, was excoriated for resigning office, while in 1143 Bernard considered what to do at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire. Bernard admitted in a letter to the abbots of Rievaulx and Fountains that he was obliged by the statutes of the Order to hold a visitation. But because of bodily weakness he could not do so and instead was sending Henry Murdac, abbot of Vauclair. We thus have an indication of how Bernard coped with the Cistercian requirement that the abbot of a mother house annually visit the daughter house: he delegated the job to others. But the letters also show Bernard carefully following events at Fountains, which ended up electing as abbot the man who clearly was Bernard's candidate, Henry Murdac. The two letters which specifically concern visitations reveal that Bernard carried out neither visitation himself. He clearly had a talent for delegating tasks to others.

What of Bernard and the General Chapter? A letter written in the name of Abbot Stephen Harding of Cîteaux and "the whole gathering of Cistercian abbots and brethren" was actually composed by Bernard himself. Holdsworth follows Bernard in his contacts with the General Chapter: in 1137 he indicated that after his Italian travels he needed the sympathy of the abbots there, while in 1143, he informed Peter the Venerable that he was going to remain at Clairvaux and only go away for the General Chapter. Holdsworth shows from the letters that Bernard took the General Chapter seriously and did his best to attend, while for visitations and abbatial elections he had no qualms about substituting other abbots for himself.

Perhaps the most exciting category in considering Bernard as father abbot is concerned with his "Pastoral Care." Here Holdsworth finds Bernard showing different concerns, as in trying to encourage novices. Bernard praised the decision of Hugh, novice at Le Miroir in the diocese of Lyon, to scorn the world but told him not to be frightened by "the roughness of our life." In such contacts Bernard of course was giving advice not only to an individual but also to every future novice who might come to read his letters. Bernard expresses himself in an immediate and personal manner, as in writing from Italy to the community at Clairvaux about how much he missed each one of its members. Such letters were public documents, read or heard by everyone in the monastery, but their very public quality could have increased the impact they had on their recipients.

The pastoral letters provided encouragement, warning, and solace, and one can think back on Michael Casey's portrait of Bernard the man and find him here in his humour and pragmatism. To abbot Guy of Trois Fontaines, a daughter house of Clairvaux, Bernard dealt with the question of what to do when the prayer of consecration over the chalice had been said and then no wine was to be found in it. Bernard told Guy what he would do. To several abbots, Bernard apologized for not coming to them but reminded them that they were bound together in spirit. One can, of course, ask how much Bernard meant such protestations, but the letters by themselves show his attention and involvement in a great number of abbeys and his attention to their abbots. Finally we have Bernard's letters to Pope Eugenius III, who did not always do what the abbot of Clairvaux wanted or asked him to do.

Christopher Holdsworth makes use in this thoughtful article of about 100 of the 500-plus letters that we have from Bernard's pen—or that

of his secretaries. "These letters combine often very practical advice, with spiritual counsel," he concludes, pointing out that the *Vita prima* gives us no similar sense of how practical Bernard could be in dealing with everyday affairs. The letters do not reveal much about the content of daily life at Clairvaux, but we begin at least to get a sense of how Bernard participated in and contributed to the monastic network that by the 1120s was the Cistercian Order. Here he took on the roles of mother and father.

The most important observation comes last: the letter collection includes some that "showed him acting in a less than typically saintly manner." In one letter he admitted to treating his biological brother Bartholomew unjustly and left it to the community to reinstate him. "Here we see no conventional saint, but one capable of learning and changing." As ever, Bernard is full of surprises.

Turning from Bernard the father abbot to "Bernard the Writer," Burcht Pranger provides us with a concentrated and exhilarating introduction to the man's rhetoric in his "self-presentation." Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this article is its return to Erich Auerbach's concept of *figura* and the demonstration of how Bernard used this technique. The analysis of the 26th Sermon on the Song of Songs includes a remonstrance to myself in terms of the legitimacy of using such sources to make any conclusions about Bernard's interior life and feelings. Today I would be more cautious than I was in 1991 in *The Difficult Saint*'s understanding of Bernard. Certainly I have learned a great deal from the literary approaches of Peter von Moos and Burcht Pranger. But I would still assert that Bernard's writings do convey his personality, if only indirectly. Certainly in structuring the content of his grief at the loss of his brother Gerard, Bernard was using his own self-image as an *exemplum* for the community at Clairvaux. Through his grief he proposed a way to reconcile monastic discipline with individual needs. Here I think Pranger and I are not far from each other.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of Burcht Pranger's work is the way he combines *persona* with *figura*. In Bernard's Second Sermon on the Ascension, for example, "it is not grand schemes we are talking about, but little movements and gestures…the subtle restaging of the *persona* of the preacher, as performing the act of ascension and return. That *persona* is none other than the *figura* of Christ himself…" I cannot claim that I always completely understand all the dimensions in Pranger's analysis of Bernard the writer, but I think he opens the subtlety and intelligence with which Bernard composed his sermons.

Perhaps this article can be considered as "merely" an appetizer for turning to Pranger's *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought*, one of the most original contributions of the past decades to Bernard studies.

Mette B. Bruun belongs to the same school of literary interpretation of Bernard's writings. Her "Bernard of Clairvaux and the Landscape of Salvation" reveals her closeness to Pranger. She takes her point of departure in the Parables, a once-neglected corner of Bernard's writings, but is also at ease in many of his lesser-known sermons. Ever since Etienne Gilson's landmark study of Bernard in 1934, it has been clear that the *regio dissimilitudinis* (almost untranslatable) is a central concept for him. But now Bruun takes us on a journey through that region, in search of the monastic *paradisus claustralis* and presents us with "Bernard as the cartographer who maps the landscape of salvation." He is constantly going over "the landscapes of the Biblical narratives," and so his talent for conveying the biblical text extends to a sense of salvation geography. We visit Babylon, Jerusalem, and Egypt, and there is special concentration on the idea of peregrination, a theme that Bruun takes back to Augustine.

Mette Bruun moves easily from biblical text to Patristic references and Bernard's work. The reader comes to realize the many levels on which Bernard operated, and I am reminded of Pranger's criticism of my literalism. I can ask if we ever really can understand Bernard, who seems to operate so easily on various exegetical levels. On the one hand we are stumped whenever we try to establish a clear fact about an event in Bernard's life, while on the other we are confronted with a rich texture of literary imagery that is almost endless. Mette Bruun devotes the last part of her article to an exposition of the *peregrinus*, the pilgrim, traveller, or wanderer, from Augustine to Bernard. Once again we return to Bernard's Sermon 26 on the Song of Songs and his lament over his brother Gerard. This has become perhaps the key text of this volume, to which several of the contributors relate.

At the end of her article Mette Bruun returns to the "topographical register" Bernard uses and concedes that it "is as evasive as is apparent." There is no "consistent vocabulary." But Bernard uses this landscape of salvation and "states his own views firmly, while leaving just enough room for his readers to appropriate his message in the light of their individual experiences through identification with *peregrini* and *viatores*." Bernard eludes us just when we might think understanding is near.

Certainly one of the most vexed topics of Bernardine studies has been his view of art. I cannot claim that Diane J. Reilly's "Bernard of Clairvaux and Christian Art" will satisfy everyone, but she does manage in a clear and convincing manner to show that Bernard had strong opinions on the use of art in Christian and especially monastic life. Ever since his *Apologia* it has been thought that he was attacking the Cluniacs for their "opulent" buildings, but as Reilly shows, there is very little evidence showing that Bernard did not approve of what could be found at Cluny. She looks closely at the early Cîteaux manuscripts and warns against the common idea that it was Bernard who determined the austerity that eventually was manifested in these manuscripts after an earlier more colourful period. Reilly mentions Conrad Rudolph's understanding of Bernard's *Apologia* as an attack on the practices of Abbot Stephen Harding, but then she turns to a recent article by Kathleen Doyle that shows how fragile the evidence is for Bernard's involvement in the matter.

Diane Reilly turns to Bernard's other writings in order to consider his sense of art outside of the *Apologia*. Her readings of *In Praise of the New Knighthood* and *Five Books on Consideration* provide a refreshing new context for the discussion. She also points to how "Bernard took a lively interest in the stunning structures built under his leadership." As for Bernard's relationship to Suger of Saint Denis, the grandest builder of them all in the period, Reilly shows how Bernard praised him for reforming his abbey and making certain that the abbey which "once resounded to the hubbub of secular business echo only to spiritual canticles." Bernard did not set his own view of art and architecture up in opposition to Suger's, and so "any attempt to interpret Bernard's *Apologia* as a response to Suger's reputation for lavish art and architectural patronage must remain speculative."

The question is moot, and James France in his own article dissents with Reilly and prefers the interpretation of Yolanta Zaluska and Conrad Rudolph that Bernard did defend austerity of decoration in opposition to what was found at early Cîteaux. James France's "The Heritage of Saint Bernard in Medieval Art" summarizes his work over the past decade in finding images of Bernard in art from the 12th to the 16th centuries. It has been surprising for me that no previous scholar took the time and made the effort to see how Bernard was portrayed. Certainly scholarly works are often adorned with attractive portraits of Bernard, even though Michael Casey regrets that his own important study of Bernard On the Song of Songs was given a cover

illustration with the *amplexus* theme, where Christ bends down from the crucifix to embrace a Bernard who is praying to him.

Casey sees the growth of these themes, not at all found in the earliest writings about Bernard, as unfortunate. The *lactation* especially, where Mary squeezes milk from her breast to a kneeling Bernard, has little to do with 12th-century Cistercian spirituality. But as James France so convincingly shows, such images and the stories behind them manifest the growth of a Bernardine tradition and new understandings and uses of the saint. Thus saints grow and develop in art and life as people make use of them, so that by the end of the Middle Ages most of the images of Saint Bernard come not from monastic but from lay environments.

France reveals aspects of Bernard's tradition that can be surprising, such as the fact that the first known statue of him is on Freiburg Cathedral and as late as about 1280. Equally surprising is the fact that it was the Templar's church in Majorca which contained the earliest representation of the lactation. As for the *amplexus* it appears in Herbert of Clairvaux's *Liber miraculorum* by the late 1170s, while the first image is from after 1300, a gap of more than 100 years between literature and art. "Why, as it would have been well known to the Cistercians, did it take more than a century before it appeared in iconography and more than a further century before it can be said to have become popular?" France points out that the theme is in harmony with Bernard's theology, but he provides no answer as to the time frame. I would hazard that the monks who worked for the canonization of Bernard were circumspect about what they told of him, while Herbert, collecting his stories after the canonization took place in 1174, may have felt greater freedom. But the delay in showing the *amplexus* in art remains a mystery.

As for the lactation, James France goes back to its known origin in a story about Fulbert of Chartres. Since Bernard took on such prominence in religious consciousness, it is not surprising that the lactation story soon become attached to him. The *lactatio* images spread in the late Middle Ages but are limited to the Iberian peninsula and northwestern Europe. Another theme that became more popular in the last medieval centuries concerns Bernard and the devil, including the representation of a story that he knew exactly the right Psalm verses. Here as in other themes the understanding and usage of Bernard changed over the centuries, and James takes stock of how images manifest changes of religious attitudes in medieval society. The article

thus provides us with a rich collection of material whose meaning and significance enhance our understanding of Bernard and his medieval tradition, also outside the monastery.

Chrysogonus Waddell's contribution to this volume, "An Old Man's Tale: My Many Years with Saint Bernard of Clairvaux," was written a few months before his death on 23 November 2008. The footnotes in several of the other articles show the debt that we all owe to Father Chrysogonus for his profound knowledge of the sources for the first century of the Cistercian Order, and especially the liturgical materials, of which he was a master. Without his publications Cistercian studies would be infinitely poorer, and certainly the Cistercian Studies Conference at Kalamazoo has now lost one of its main contributors and participants. For this reason it has seemed right and fitting to dedicate this book to Chrysogonus Waddell.

Some readers will perhaps be surprised by his breezy and self-ironic tone, but they are experiencing Chrysogonus in writing the way he was in speech. Self-deprecating yes, but just wait for what follows and the insights the man had. Some readers will perhaps be surprised that the article speaks as much of Thomas Merton as it does of Saint Bernard, but Chrysogonus as a young novice found his way to Bernard through the instruction of Father Louis, as he always called the man we know as Merton. So what does Chrysogonus tell us? "…what tradition is all about: the past living on in the present, but opening on to what lies ahead." For more than 50 years Chrysogonus lived the Cistercian tradition and shared it with others, both monastic and lay. He was convinced, as he ended his article, that "The best is yet to come." I hope he is right.

Our collection ends with another scholar who looks forward to what comes after, John R. Sommerfeldt, who was one of the founders of the Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo that also gave birth to the Cistercian Studies Conference. In a few concentrated pages Sommerfeldt tells of his lifelong journey through Bernard and what he has learned from him. Here there were a number of surprises, especially in a rejection of a monastic life based on extreme asceticism. Bernard turns out to be keenly aware of the joys of the sensual universe. Moreover, "he did not oppose Abelard's application of dialectics to theological questions." His epistemology is much broader than usually thought, and he describes a universe "energized…by the creating and redeeming power of love."

John Sommerfeldt concludes his reflections with Bernard in terms of pilgrimage, and so we return to a theme central in Mette Bruun's analysis of his writings. We are wayfarers, *viatores*. Sommerfeldt in his journey has been privileged with 60 years of study "to discover that the Bernard I once wished to follow is a myth." Now he can thank the many guides he has and with whom he looks forward to continuing his conversations. One of these scholars and monks to whom we all can be grateful is Jean Leclercq, whose *Love of Learning and the Desire for God* still provides an invaluable guide to reading Bernard and monastic texts and whose edition of Bernard, together with Henri Rochais, remains our standard text. Certainly John Sommerfeldt can look forward to a conversation with Jean Leclercq, just as Dom Leclercq said he looked forward to a dialogue with Saint Bernard.

As editor I cannot guarantee such a dialogue in the beyond, but here and now I offer the reader a tribute of many good conversations about Bernard of Clairvaux, his life, thought, impact on his times, and his importance to generations of monks, nuns, and lay scholars. With James France's article we even approach the presence of Bernard in the lives of ordinary people. Bernard is everywhere, for his life and writings are at the very foundation of Western culture and spirituality.

BERNARD'S LIFE AND WORKS: A REVIEW

Brian Patrick McGuire

Practically all of Bernard of Clairvaux's writings and actions have been discussed and questioned by scholars.[1] Except for his death on 20 August 1153, many of the central dates in his life are still being discussed. In what follows here I will give a chronological overview of Bernard, but without going into the detail that a full-fledged biography would require.

Ever since Bernard's lifetime his admirers and detractors have been trying to capture the essence of his charisma and influence. His friend William of Saint Thierry more or less completed what became the first book of the *Vita Prima*, Bernard's hagiography, before his death in 1148, five years before Bernard's death.[2] The author of the second book of this work, Ernald of Bonneval, was abbot of a Benedictine house near Chartres, and it is likely that Ernald began his task before Bernard's death.[3] The second book concentrates on Bernard's involvement in the papal schism between Innocent II and Anacletus but also shows Bernard as miracle worker, moving from place to place in Aquitaine and Italy with crowds of the poor and lame seeking his assistance.

Books Three to Five of the *Vita Prima* were written by Geoffrey of Auxerre, the Paris scholar who was won over by Bernard's preaching and joined Clairvaux.[4] As one of Bernard's secretaries, Geoffrey was close to his master during the last years of his life and did his best after

---

[1] See Adriaan H. Bredero, "St Bernard and the Historians," in M. Basil Pennington, *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Studies Commemorating the Eighth Centenary of his Canonization* (Kalamazoo, 1977), pp. 27–62. Also Anselme Dimier, "Sur le pas de saint Bernard," *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 25 (1974), 223–248.

[2] J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina* (PL), 22 vols (Paris, 1844–64), 185:225–66. See the *subscriptio* added at the end of Liber 1, after the death of William, by Burchard, abbot of Balerne, col. 266–67. See also the article by E. Rozanne Elder in this volume.

[3] PL 185:225–302. Adriaan H. Bredero, *Etudes sur la "Vita Prima" de Saint Bernard* (Rome, 1960), esp. pp. 109–116. Christopher Holdsworth has kindly pointed out to me that Ernald may have been selected for this task because as head of a monastery in the diocese of Chartres, he was "well informed about the doings of Geoffrey bishop of Chartres and Theobald of Blois, who both play a considerable part in Book Two."

[4] PL 185:301–68. Bredero (note 3 above), pp. 116–147.

Bernard's death to secure his canonization, which took place in 1174.[5] Geoffrey did not follow the more-or-less chronological structure of the first two books of the *Vita Prima*. He sought to provide a general portrait of Bernard in terms of his appearance and effect on people. At the same time, however, he dealt with Bernard's involvements in the controversies of his time, such as his attack on Abelard. In Geoffrey's own words, contained in the Preface to the third book of the *Vita Prima*: "First of all are pursued those matters which especially pertain to the way of life, customs and teaching (*habitum, mores, atque doctrinam*) of the blessed father; secondly the many good actions (*virtutes multas*) performed by him are articulated. Thirdly the work is finished with the good ending to his life."[6]

In spite of modern studies on the composition of the *Vita Prima* we have long lacked a critical edition. Scholars still make use of the edition made by Jean Mabillon in the 17th century, reprinted by J.-P. Migne in 1855. The *Fragmenta*, the early draft of Bernard's life prepared by Geoffrey of Auxerre (also known as the *Vita Tertia* and used by William of Saint Thierry), has a fairly recent edition, and now at last the *Vita Prima* is appearing in a critical text.[7] Otherwise there is a *Vita Secunda* by Alan of Auxerre, who criticized his predecessors and said they were too wordy and not trustworthy.[8] But his work is nothing but an anthology of the *Vita Prima*, which leaves out unpleasant sections, such as the description of Bernard's stomach ailment.

Finally there is the *Vita Quarta*, drafted about 1180 by John the Hermit, who made use of Bernard's cousin Robert for some new materials about the saint.[9] Here we see a transition from hagiographical materials to *exemplum* literature, as when Bernard is remembered for telling

---

[5] Bredero, "The Canonization of Bernard of Clairvaux," in Pennington (note 1 above), pp. 63–100.

[6] PL 185:302.

[7] Robert Lechat, "Les Fragmenta de vita et miraculis S. Bernardi," *Analecta Bollandiana* 50 (1932), 83–122. See Ferruccio Gastaldelli, "Le più antiche testimonianze biografiche su San Bernardo. Studio storico-critico sui 'Fragmenta Gaufridi,'" in *Studi su San Bernardo e Goffredo di Auxerre* (Florence, 2001), pp. 43–127. *Vita Prima Sancti Bernardi* in Guillelmus a Sancto Theodorico *Opera Omnia*, ed. Paul Verdeyen, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 89B (Turnhout, 2011).

[8] Contained in PL 185:469–524. See the prologue, col. 469: "…nos ex eadem narratione nonnulla omittentes…breviori perstringimus schedula…Primo quod scriptorum, tametsi vera sint, prolixitas onerosa solet esse legentibus." Bredero dates the composition to between 1167 and 1170. See "Etudes" (note 3 above), p. 139, n. 9.

[9] PL 185:531–50. An initial letter to Herbert, archbishop of Sardinia (col. 533–34), places the work sometime after 1180.

his monks that if Judas had taken the Cistercian habit, he would have been saved. This story is found elsewhere in a Clairvaux exemplum collection from the 1170s.[10]

In contrast to the relatively incomplete textual situation of the hagiographical sources for Bernard we have the solid achievement of the works of Bernard published from 1957–77 by Jean Leclercq and Henri Rochais.[11] It was especially the achievement of Leclercq, Benedictine monk of Clervaux abbey in Luxembourg, to scour the libraries not only of Europe but also of North America, in pursuit of manuscripts containing the works of Bernard. Now at last the spurious works from the later Middle Ages attributed to Bernard could be put aside and the writings that came from his pen could be placed in chronological order.[12] The *Opera Sancti Bernardi* is a beautiful piece of scholarship, but the notes are often inadequate, with the result that later Italian and German editions incorporated the Latin text but added their own notes. The German edition's notes on Bernard's letters are taken directly from the Italian edition. There is a French edition in the Sources chrétiennes series, which is not complete.[13]

The *corpus* of works by Bernard is not overwhelming, as is the case with the writings of scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. It is possible to get a good grasp of Bernard's thought by reading him slowly and carefully, especially with the help of a guide such as that provided by Etienne Gilson in his *The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard*.[14] But as the Australian Trappist-Cistercian Michael Casey shows in his article in this volume, Bernard has layers of meaning, and it takes time to penetrate them. Especially his *Sermons on the Song of Songs* require careful thought and even meditation. At the

[10] PL 185:544–45: "Unde, inquit, desolationem habetis, fratres, et filii mei? Dico vobis in veritate Christi, si Judas hic esset qui tradidit Deum, ubi vos estis, et ipse misericordiam consequeretur." See *Collectaneum exemplorum et visionum clarevallense*, ed. Olivier Legendre (Turnhout, 2005), p. 7.

[11] *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO]. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone.

[12] Many of these pseudo-Bernardian works are included in PL 184. Already in the 19th century it was known that many works attributed to Bernard were not from his pen. It would contribute greatly to our understanding of late medieval spirituality if more work were done with these often-moving expressions of piety.

[13] See *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Sämtliche Werke*, vols 1–10, ed. Gerhard B. Winkler (Innsbruck, 1990–2002). Also *Opere di San Bernardo*, ed. F. Gastaldelli (Rome, 1984–).

[14] First published in English in 1940; repr. Kalamazoo, 1990.

same time, however, Bernard does not repay the reader with the type of independent prayers and meditations found in Anselm of Canterbury. Bernard's prayers are usually indirect and implied in his text, although there are a few exceptions.[15]

In what follows here I will not try to provide any new interpretation of the man I once called "the difficult saint."[16] My purpose here is to give the reader an overview of what Bernard did and what he wrote. For those familiar with these facts I suggest skipping this article and moving ahead to the more specialized studies that follow. But for the reader and scholar interested in the events of Bernard's life, this article is meant to be a point of departure.

The periodisation that historians establish is, of course, artificial, but in order to provide a sense of Bernard's development and involvements, I will use the following division: 1090/91–1112: origins and youth; 1113–15: monastic conversion; 1115–20: the young abbot of Clairvaux; 1121–25: first manifestations of a public role; 1128–29: first involvements outside the Order; 1130–38: a leading figure in the papal schism; 1139–42: in pursuit of orthodoxy; 1143–49: diplomat, crusader, missionary; 1150–53: last years.

Origins and Youth 1090/91–1112

In describing the circumstances of Bernard's death in 1153, his hagiographer Geoffrey of Auxerre wrote that he had lived "about sixty-three years."[17] Geoffrey thus did not claim that Bernard was born precisely in 1090, as most modern biographers since Elphège Vacandard have done. The Dutch historian Adriaan Bredero, who has done much to challenge the hagiographical understanding of Bernard, has argued for 1091 as the year of birth.[18] I must admit, however, that I have difficulty in following the thread of his thinking. At least one prominent scholar

---

[15] As in *Sermones in Cantica* (*Sermons on the Song of Songs*; abbreviated henceforth as SC) 16.15, in addressing holy Wisdom (SBO 1, pp. 97–98). I am grateful to Christopher Holdsworth for pointing out this prayer to me.

[16] *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 1991).

[17] PL 185:360: "Consummatis ergo feliciter vitae suae diebus et annis circiter sexaginta tribus expletis."

[18] "Saint Bernard est-il né en 1090 ou en 1091?" in *Papauté, monachisme et théories politiques 1. Le pouvoir et l'institution ecclésiale. Etudes d'histoire médiévale offertes à Marcel Pacaut*, ed. P. Guichard, M.-T. Lorcin, J.-M. Poisson, M. Rubellin (Lyon, 1994), pp. 229–241. See also Gastaldelli, "I primi venti anni di San Bernardo. Problemi e

who has recently completed a biography of Bernard has kept to 1090,[19] and I think the best we can do is to give both years as possibilities. It is, of course, a reflection of our own modern concerns to get the date of birth right, while in the Middle Ages what mattered was the date of a saint's death, his or her birthday in heaven.

Bernard's mother, Aleth de Montbard, belonged to a powerful noble family in Burgundy.[20] Her father, Bernard, was likely to have been a descendant of the former counts of Bar-sur-Seine. The saint's father, Tescelin, owned property in Châtillon-sur-Seine, where his son Bernard would be educated, and was the lord of the castle of Fontaines outside of Dijon in Burgundy (today the district is a suburb of the town). According to her nephew Robert (Aleth's sister's son and recipient of the letter which Geoffrey placed first in his collection of Bernard's letters), who was a source for the *Vita quarta*,[21] Aleth's father wanted her to become a nun. For that purpose she learned Latin, but at the age of 15 Tescelin sought her hand in marriage.[22] If this information is correct, then we may have an explanation for Bernard's literary interests. He had a mother who valued learning and so encouraged him to do the same.

Bernard was the third son, after Guy and Gerard and before Andrew, Bartholomew, and Nivard. The one girl was named Hombeline. William of Saint Thierry, who must have gotten his information from Bernard and his brothers, says that Aleth was considered unusual in nursing her children with her own milk.[23] At the same time, however, she brought them up "for the desert rather than for the court" by feeding

---

interpretazioni" (note 7 above), pp. 3–41, esp. 8–10. Gastaldelli concludes that 1090 is the more likely year of birth.

[19] Peter Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Leben und Werk des berühmten Zisterziensers* (Darmstadt, 1998), p. 3, while Pierre Aubé, *Saint Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 2003), p. 30, note, has chosen 1091. See Elphège Vacandard, *Vie de Saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols, 4th ed. (Paris, 1927), 1:1.

[20] For background, Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux, *Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1953), "Le milieu familial," pp. 3–15.

[21] PL 185:537: "referente quodam abbate religiosissimo, nomine, Roberto, qui magis quam sexaginta septem annis in monasterio sub jugo regularis disciplinae vixit; nepos siquidem ejusdem matronae…filius autem sororis suae; ad quem etiam beatus Bernardus primam epistolarum suarum dirigit." As stated, this is the Robert to whom Bernard composed the letter.

[22] PL 185:535: "…litteris erudiri voluit, ut in futuro monacham faceret."

[23] PL 185:227: *Vita Prima* 1.1: "…quasi cum lacte materno materni quoddammodo boni infundens eis naturam." (Abbreviated as VP with number of the book and section; I do not include the chapter numbers).

them on "coarser, commoner fare."[24] Food and its deprivation is an important theme in the *Vita Prima*, as in many medieval saints' lives, thus confirming the claim of the Oxford scholar Beryl Smalley that it is more significant to look at Bernard's eating habits than at his sexual proclivities.[25]

When Aleth was pregnant with Bernard she is said to have had a dream of a barking dog inside her.[26] A version of this story was later recycled and used for Dominic, just as the Cistercian exemplum of the order found beneath Mary's mantle later became a Dominican tale.[27] Instead of trying to distinguish between cult and history, as Adriaan Bredero does,[28] I consider such stories to be valuable indications of how Bernard's successors remembered him. The cult of Bernard is part of his history and that of the Cistercian Order, and every story we have about him contributes to our understanding of how he was loved or hated.

Some of the stories we have about the child Bernard are conventional, as in his rejection of a sorceress who was brought to cure his headache. But this episode is followed by a description of how at Christmas

---

[24] Ibid.: "…eremo magis quam curiae nutriebat, non patiens delicatioribus assuescere cibis, sed grossioribus et communibus pascens." I use the translation of Martinus Cawley, *Bernard of Clairvaux. Early Biographies* (Lafayette, Oregon, 2000), p. 4 [abbreviated henceforth as Cawley].

[25] In her review of Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays*, in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980), 108–10. Leclercq's attempt to psychoanalyse Bernard in his *Nouveau visage de Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1976), Eng. as *A Second Look at Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 1990). Adriaan H. Bredero criticized this study in "The Sainthood of Bernard of Clairvaux," in *Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994), pp. 181–197.

[26] PL 185:227, VP 1.2.

[27] See, for example, the *Legenda Aurea* for Dominic's feast day, 4 August, as in *The Golden Legend*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York, 1969), p. 413. Dominic's mother is said to have dreamed that she carried a dog with a lighted torch in his mouth, a sign of how he would brighten the whole world, while Bernard's mother's dog "will also be medicinal, healing many a person of disease of the soul" (Cawley, p. 4). For the Cistercians under Mary's cope and the Dominican "takeover," see Brian McGuire, "The Cistercians and the Rise of the Exemplum in Early Thirteenth Century France," in *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and their Stories, 1100–1250* (Aldershot, Hampshire, 2002), article V, pp. 227–228.

[28] *Bernard of Clairvaux. Between Cult and History* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996). Bredero's project is sympathetic: "I continued to be intrigued by the question of how Bernard must be understood as a human being" (p. xi), but as Peter Dinzelbacher points out, Bredero borders on "Hyperkritik" (*Bernhard von Clairvaux*, note 19 above, p. 365).

he had a vision of the child Jesus.[29] William of Saint Thierry links Bernard's insight to what probably is his first literary work, *Homilies in Praise of the Virgin*.[30] But we have here a perception of the infant Jesus that is a forerunner of what will come with Francis of Assisi. The vision is something unique, for William a sign of what the child Bernard would become, for us an indication of the affective spirituality Bernard would champion.

Bernard's elder brothers were meant to be soldiers, but Aleth decided that her third son would enter the Church. So she handed him over to the care and instruction of the canons of Saint Vorles at Châtillon, perhaps from the age of seven or eight, and it is here Bernard acquired the elements of Latin prose style based on the Vulgate Bible that became the foundation of his writings.[31] It is probably pointless to explain Bernard's literary brilliance on the basis of his teachers, but at the same time it is important to acknowledge that Bernard must have had good teachers. He claimed, of course, that his best masters were the woods and trees, and certainly he made use of his later manual labour at Cîteaux for meditating on Scripture: "…to this day he confesses that whatever competence he has in the Scriptures, whatever spiritual sensitivity he has for them, stems mainly from his meditating and praying in woodland or field."[32] The Cistercian talent for what Jean Leclercq has called monastic theology, the absorption of Sacred Scripture into a long conversation with God, became especially Bernard's trademark.[33]

Bernard's mother died when he was a teenager, perhaps in 1107.[34] William of Saint Thierry emphasizes her holiness of life and also how her memory was decisive in convincing Bernard to enter a monastery:

---

[29] PL 185:229, VP 1.4, trans. in Cawley, p. 6: "Thereupon, who should be on hand but the Boy Jesus, revealing himself and his holy Nativity to this chosen boy of his, instilling new instalments of tender faith and initiating in him the mysteries of divine contemplation!"

[30] *Sermones in laudibus Virginis Mariae*, SBO 4, pp. 13–58.

[31] "Les premières années, les études à Châtillon," in *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 20 above), pp. 17–27.

[32] PL 185:240, VP 1.23, Cawley, p. 23.

[33] Leclercq's seminal *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957) was clearly the fruit of his reading especially of Bernard and marked a new opening to affective, experiential theology. See McGuire, "Love of Learning: Remembering Jean Leclercq," *The American Benedictine Review* 57 (2006), 41–59.

[34] Here I follow Laura Dal Prà, *Cronologia della vita di S. Bernardo di Clairvaux* (Casamari, 1990). I am most grateful to my friend and colleague James France for making me aware of this study, which, however, at times does not provide references for its assertions.

"Time and again, he seemed to see her coming to meet him, reproach him, rebuke him. Not for such trifles had she educated him with such tender care, nor for such hopes had she trained him!"[35] In the immediate aftermath of Aleth's death, however, Bernard had a few years when he followed the impulses of his friends: "Their friendship, ever stormy, was bent on conforming him to them."[36] The description of dangerous friends recalls Augustine's in his *Confessions*, and at the same time evokes the dilemma of the teenager trying to live up to the challenges and dares of contemporaries. It is perhaps during this period that Bernard wrote the erotic poetry that one of his enemies, an admirer of Peter Abelard, later attributed to him and which, alas, is lost.[37]

It is not my intention here to psychologise, but the death of his mother must have been a source of great pain for the sensitive young Bernard. Later, when his sister Hombeline arrived at Clairvaux, Bernard at first refused to see her. Because of her lavish apparel and arrogant retinue he treated her badly, and it was only after her reminder that Christ died for her too that Bernard apparently felt obliged to make himself visible.[38] For all the devotion he showed to his male friends, he generally kept a distance from women. A later Cistercian generation would publicly embrace devout women,[39] but Bernard seems to have reserved his feelings for women to his mother and the Virgin Mary.

William provides three stories about Bernard's being tempted by the sight or presence of women.[40] Michael Casey once provided six alternative interpretations of these passages and surmised, "The reason women kept jumping into Bernard's bed is that there was a time when they knew they were welcome."[41] His suggestion is impossible to prove, and I prefer to think of Bernard during his years of "Sturm und Drang" in the aftermath of his mother's death being exposed to sexual

---

[35] PL 185:231–32, VP 1.9, Cawley, p. 10.

[36] PL 185:230, VP 1.6, Cawley, p. 8: "…et amicitiae procellosae, similem sibi efficere gestientes."

[37] PL 178:1857–70, *Berengarii Scholastici Apologeticus*: "Nonne id etiam tuae memoriae altius est insignitum, quod fratres tuos rhythmico certamine acutaeque inventionis versutia semper exsuperare contendebas?" (col. 1857).

[38] PL 185:244–45, VP 1.30.

[39] McGuire, "The Cistercians and the Transformation of Monastic Friendship," in *Friendship and Faith* (note 27 above), article III.

[40] PL 185:230–31, VP 1.7–8.

[41] "Toward a Methodology for the *Vita Prima*: Translating the First Life into Biography," in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 55–70, esp. p. 68. This is a superb article.

temptation. One can speculate whether Bernard followed his desire and lost his virginity, but if he did, he apparently did not admit the lapse to his friend William.

Monastic Conversion 1113–15

At some point after about 1110 Bernard discovered the monastic experiment at Cîteaux, which until about 1119 was known as the New Monastery (*Novum monasterium*). It would be wonderful if we had Bernard's own account, but we have to make do with that of William of Saint Thierry, who claims that the New Monastery was plagued by limited numbers: "Up till then almost no one had resorted there for conversion's sake, given its extremely austere style of life and its poverty."[42]

Because of this account it has been long thought that Bernard with his brothers and friends entered in 1112 and that this infusion of personnel enabled the abbot Stephen the following year to make his monastery's first foundation, at La Ferté.[43] In 1961, however, Adriaan Bredero argued that William exaggerated the problems of early Cîteaux, and the foundation of La Ferté took place before or at about the same time as the appearance of Bernard and his comrades.[44] We thus have an indication of how Bernard's hagiographers could exaggerate his impact, even though there is no doubt that without Bernard, the New Monastery would not have had the success it did in establishing dozens of daughter houses.

Why did Bernard become a monk? According to one recent interpreter, he was afraid of losing his chastity and going to hell, so the monastery seemed to be the best protection.[45] I am inclined to reject this interpretation and take seriously what William writes about how Bernard's brothers tried to keep him out of a monastery, while at the

[42] PL 185:231, VP 1.8, Cawley p. 10: "…cum vix adhuc aliquis conversionis gratia illuc declinaret, ob nimiam vitae ipsius et paupertatis austeritatem."

[43] Stephen is usually called "Stephen Harding," but this surname was not used before 1614, according to Michael Casey in his helpful criticism of an earlier draft of this chapter.

[44] *Etudes sur la "Vita Prima" de Saint Bernard* (note 3 above), pp. 58–59.

[45] Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux* (note 19 above), p. 14.

same time the memory of his mother made him feel that he was not meant to pursue his literary studies as a secular cleric.[46]

The decisive moment may have come in a church on Bernard's way to join his brothers in their siege of the castle of Grancey. This moment of conversion is the stuff of hagiography, but Aleth's continuing influence on Bernard seems more than likely. Her presence was also decisive for Bernard's brother Andrew, who cried out: "I see her: I see my mother."[47] The eldest brother Guy was hindered by marriage and baby daughters, but Bernard asked God to make Guy's wife ill after she refused to let her husband have his freedom to join the others. Once again Bernard was not gentle towards a woman. His second brother Gerard, who was to become so important for him as Clairvaux's cellarer, was a soldier, just as the other brothers except for the youngest, Nivard. When Gerard was taken captive by his enemies, he cried out, "I am a monk, a monk of Cîteaux."[48] The captors paid no attention, but later Gerard escaped from his prison by a miracle that recalls Paul's liberation in the Acts of the Apostles (16:25).

William of Saint Thierry notes that Bernard did not go immediately with his companions to the New Monastery. For about six months they lived a kind of practice monastic life on the family property at Châtillon.[49] William compares their situation to that of the early Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. 14:24–25). Jean Leclercq used this section of the *Vita Prima* to make the claim that Bernard had mastered the monastic life before he actually entered and so was the real founder of the Cistercian Order.[50] I think this conclusion overinterprets the hagiographical material. The point is that Bernard and his friends wanted to be sure that they could live the austere life of the New Monastery.[51] A story about Bernard's childhood friend Hugh of Mâcon indicates that Châtillon was used as a base for making contact with potential

---

[46] Note 37 above.

[47] PL 185:232, VP 1.9, Cawley p. 11.

[48] PL 185:233, VP 1.11, Cawley p. 12.

[49] PL 185:234–36, VP 1.13–16.

[50] "La 'paternité' de S. Bernard et les débuts de l'ordre cistercien," *Revue bénédictin* 103 (1993), 445–81, summarized in "Saint Bernard and the Beginnings of the Cistercian Order," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 29 (1994), 379–393.

[51] See Brian McGuire, "Who Founded the Order of Cîteaux?" in E. Rozanne Elder, *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Essays in Honor of Jean Leclercq* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 389–413, esp. pp. 405–408.

monastic candidates. Here there were also two men who failed to cope with the challenge and whose stories are intended as warnings.

Bernard and his brothers left behind their youngest brother. Guy is supposed to have said to Nivard that he received all the family property, but the youth replied: "So it's heaven for you and earth's bit of land for me? Hardly a fair deal!"[52] This remark epitomizes the pithy and memorable *bon mot*, easily remembered, that is the stuff of exemplum literature. It is not by accident that Nivard's complaint was included in the *Legenda Aurea* version of Bernard's *vita*.[53] The compiler of this eminently successful anthology of saints' lives knew how to pick and choose the best materials for his work. His rendering of Bernard's life is perhaps one of history's most successful in making the saint come alive via a few central statements and incidents.[54]

William did his best to provide an overview of how the young Bernard spent his first monastic years: we are told about how as a novice he never noticed the details of the buildings in which he lived,[55] how he regretted the loss of the time during which he had to sleep, and how he ruined his digestion with his fasting, with the result that "nowadays his ruined stomach promptly throws up, undigested, whatever he forces down his throat."[56] Bernard, in spite of his delicate constitution, engaged in manual labour in the fields with the other novices and monks. When ordered not to participate in the harvest work, he would weep and pray God that he be allowed to contribute.[57] He got his wish and prided himself on being an expert in the harvest routine. Bernard is thus described as an ideal monk from the very first. Here we are stymied by hagiographical conventions, but William's graphic description of Bernard's painful digestion does not indicate total approval.

---

[52] PL 185:236, VP 1.17, Cawley, p. 17: "Vobis ergo, inquit, coelum, et mihi terra? Non ex aequo divisio haec facta est."

[53] *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea*, ed. Th. Graesse (Osnabrück, 1965), p. 530: "Cui non pueriliter puer respondit: vos ergo coelum habebitis et mihi solum terra relinquitis? Non ex aequo divisio facta est haec."

[54] See Brian McGuire, "A Saint's Afterlife: Bernard in the Golden Legend and in Other Medieval Collections," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, ed. Kaspar Elm (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 179–211.

[55] PL 185:238, VP 1.20. See Michael Casey, "Bernard the Observer," in E. Rozanne Elder (ed.), *Goad and Nail: Studies in Medieval Cistercian History X* (Kalamazoo, 1985), pp. 1–20.

[56] PL 185:239–40, VP 1.21–22, Cawley pp. 21–22: "…corrupto stomacho crudum continuo per os solet rejicere quod ingeritur."

[57] PL 185:240, VP 1.24, Cawley p. 23.

The Young Abbot of Clairvaux 1115–20

William of Saint Thierry says little or nothing about Abbot Stephen, only that God put it in his heart to found a daughter house and make Bernard its abbot. In later exemplum literature there is a story of how Bernard had decided to say special prayers in memory of his parents but, in the midst of his regular duties at the New Monastery, once forgot to do so. Abbot Stephen had to remind him, an indication that the young monk was not perfect in his observances.[58]

The account of Clairvaux's beginnings is vintage Cistercian, emphasizing the site as a wilderness (*in loco horroris et vastae solitudinis*, Deut. 32:10).[59] William's admiration for how the monks lived on the most coarse bread probably is a result of what he himself saw on his first visits to the monastery. He tells how Bernard had a dream of a multitude of people living in the valley, a sign of future fruitfulness. But he also adds a description of Bernard that by no means fits with hagiographical niceties: "At one moment he is dejected and confesses himself unworthy that any fruit should sprout by way of him; at another moment he forgets himself and is on fire with fierce ardour."[60] Was Bernard what we today call manic depressive?[61] It would be wrong to conclude on the basis of a single passage, but his almost unlimited energy at times seems to be followed by deep pessimism about his own efforts. Certainly he was pushing himself to the limit and trying to live up to the Pauline challenge of being all things to all people in order to save all (1 Cor. 9:22).

---

[58] Conrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum Cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961), distinctio I, cap. 23, p. 82. Here Bernard's forgetfulness is called *negligentia*.

[59] PL 185:241, VP 1.25. The same biblical phrase is used in the account of the beginnings of the Cistercian Order provided in the *Exordium Cistercii*, ch. 1. See Chrysogonus Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Cîteaux Commentarii cistercienses, 1999), p. 400. For the foundation date, see Michael Casey, "Bernard and the Crisis at Morimond: Did the Order Exist in 1124?" *CSQ* 38 (2003), 119–75, esp. 119–120.

[60] PL 185:242, VP 1.26, Cawley p. 25: "Modo enim seipsum dejiciens, fatebatur indignum, per quem fructus aliquis proveniret: modo oblitus sui, aestuabat flagrantissimo ardore…"

[61] Today this condition is more frequently called "bipolar disorder" in order to represent the two extremes of affect. I am wary of the historian's use of psychiatric terms to describe medieval people, but in Bernard's case there is certainly evidence of vacillations in his emotional life.

In general William was a keen observer. At one moment he delivers the standard hagiographical tale of how the right amount of money appeared in the nick of time to sustain the monks through winter.[62] But in the next episode William describes how difficult it was for Bernard to preach to the monks in a way that they could understand. He "scared away from himself almost all of the men he had to govern, men into whose midst he had come to share their *conversatio*."[63] Bernard overestimated his monks' abilities and virtues. When he realized that he was not being understood, he was tempted to isolate himself. Eventually he received a vision encouraging him to speak out.[64] Our contemporary understanding of depression as withdrawal into the self because of inability to connect with others seems a possible understanding for what was happening to Bernard.

Whatever was going on in his interior life, the young abbot was able not only to maintain the discipline of a new foundation but also to send out monks to establish Clairvaux's first daughter house. This was Trois Fontaines, whose official foundation date is 18 October 1118.[65] The *Vita Prima* says nothing about the new monastery, perhaps because William wanted to concentrate on the immediate impact of Bernard at Clairvaux. William provides very little sense of Bernard's contribution to the development of the Cistercian Order.

At about the same time Bernard composed *The Steps of Humility and Pride*.[66] According to Christopher Holdsworth it was based on talks Bernard previously had given to his monks.[67] Bernard's point of departure is the Rule of Saint Benedict and its description of the steps of humility. Bernard added corresponding steps of pride and provided for his monks what later monastic generations have considered to be a very believable and likely description of jealousies and egotism in a community: "The monk that has come down the two steps of curiosity and levity of mind will find much to upset him. He is saddened every

---

[62] PL 185:242, VP 1.27.

[63] PL 185:243, VP 1.28, Cawley p. 27: "…homines quos regere, et inter quos conversari veniebat, pene omnes a se absterruit."

[64] PL 185:244, VP 1.29.

[65] For background, see http://lamop.univ-paris1.fr/baudin/bibliographie/bibliographie.htm

[66] Text in SBO 3, pp. 13–50. Trans. Ambrose Conway in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux. Treatises II* (Washington D.C., 1974), pp. 25–82.

[67] Christopher Holdsworth has redated the early works, and I follow many of his suggestions. See his "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux," *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 45 (1994), 21–60, especially the helpful overview pp. 58–60.

time he sees the goodness of others, impatient with humiliation. He finds an escape in false consolations."[68] This is the third step of pride, giddiness or *falsa laetitia*.

Such chapters reveal Bernard the abbot's insight into his own weaknesses and those of his monks. According to a good monastic friend of mine, this work of Bernard is the easiest of his writings for contemporary monks and nuns to read, for many of them see in its descriptions their own situations.[69]

Probably in the summer of 1119 Bernard's stomach problems developed into severe illness. William of Champeaux, once a Paris master and now bishop of Châlons, intervened and petitioned the fledgling General Chapter being held at what by now was called Cîteaux to have Bernard handed over to his care.[70] If the date of 1119 is correct, this was the central meeting at which Abbot Stephen presented his *Carta caritatis* as the constitution of the new Order of Cîteaux.[71] According to William, there were only a "very few" (*pauculis*) abbots present, and Bernard would not have been among them.[72]

Bishop William got what he asked for: Bernard was to live for a year outside the cloister, and his food and drink were to be carefully regulated. We thus have the great irony that the Bernard whom William had praised for his extreme asceticism was fairly quickly removed from it. Here as in so much else Bernard was exceptional and required a special regime, and it is difficult to accept his way of life as admirable, for his practices ruined his health. In the words of Beryl Smalley, he was a "sick man living on his nerves."[73]

It was during this year that William of Saint Thierry first came to Clairvaux to spend time with Bernard. His description indicates enthusiasm for Bernard's person and way of life: "Had a wish been offered me that day, nothing would I have so desired as to remain there with

---

[68] *Steps of Humility and Pride* XII.40, trans. p. 67.

[69] Father Luke Anderson O.C., prior of Mount Saint Mary's Monastery, New Ringgold Pennsylvania, preaches retreats and makes use of the *Steps*.

[70] PL 185:246, VP 1.32.

[71] Constance Berman has dismissed the 1119 papal privilege given in recognition of the new order (*The Cistercian Evolution*, Philadelphia 2000, pp. 86–92). Chrysogonus Waddell's answer is contained in *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 51 (2000), 317–327.

[72] The papal privilege which confirmed the *Carta caritatis* is dated to 23 December 1119, and so it is likely this Cistercian constitution was drawn up at the General Chapter in September of that year. See Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts* (note 59 above).

[73] See Beryl Smalley's review of Jean Leclercq's Bernard, note 25 above.

him and be his servant for ever."[74] But Bernard did not express such a wish, while he indicated displeasure with the regime imposed on him and especially the "irrational beast" who looked after him. Once again William was sensitive to Bernard's diet and his stomach, but he blamed his friend's problems on his caretaker and not on Bernard. The man is accused to serving him raw blood instead of butter and to have let him drink oil instead of water.

In spite of this sorry state of affairs, William chose to praise the Clairvaux he found in terms of the glories of ancient Egyptian monasticism.[75] His description of coming to Clairvaux has become a classic characterization of 12th-century monastic life, for William quite consciously compared "the impenetrable woods…within the narrow confines of adjacent mountains" to Saint Benedict's cave.[76] The decision to see the monks as hermits in community has had a lasting effect on Cistercian monasticism, even though Bernard himself clearly had a great capacity for friendship and probably rarely was alone.

During Bernard's year of convalescence, when he was supposed to be kept away from abbatial duties, Clairvaux's second daughter was founded, Fontenay (29 October 1119).[77] It is hard to imagine Bernard's being kept out of such an important decision, but if his quarantine was effective, then his biological brothers must have taken over the matter for him. During this time, however, he did continue to write, and Christopher Holdsworth dates to 1119–20 the *Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary*.[78] Once again it seems likely that Bernard wrote down sermons he once had preached for his monks. As Jean Leclercq has pointed out in dealing with the *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, the text we have is not the same that was preached. Bernard probably refined his thinking and form of expression.[79]

Already in the opening sentences, referring to Luke 1:26–27 (The Angel Gabriel was sent by God…), Bernard managed to convey a

---

[74] PL 185:246, VP 1.33, Cawley p. 33.
[75] PL 185:247, VP 1.35.
[76] PL 185:248, VP 1.35, Cawley p. 35.
[77] I follow Christopher Holdsworth, "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux" (note 67 above), p. 58. Most of the internet sites (such as www.abbayedefontenay.com) give 1118, but Archdale A. King in his still useful *Cîteaux and her Elder Daughters* (London, 1954) gives 1119.
[78] Holdsworth, "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux" (note 67 above), pp. 36–39. *Sermones in laudibus Virginis Mariae*, SBO 3, pp. 13–58.
[79] "Were the Sermons on the Song of Songs Delivered in Chapter?" Introduction to *On the Song of Songs*, vol. 2, trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, 1976), pp. vii–xxx.

sense of excitement and joy, based on his total command of Scripture: "It was as if a gentle southerly wind were blowing (Job 37.17) and as if the Sun of righteousness were shining close to earth (Mal. 4:2), causing sweet smelling spiritual spices to flow (Song 4:16)."[80] In the second homily Bernard considered the role of Joseph in the life of Jesus and introduced an affective role for him: "To him <Joseph> it was given not only to see and to hear what many kings and prophets had longed to see and did not see, to hear and did not hear, but even to carry him, to take him by the hand, to hug and kiss him, to feed him and keep him safe."[81] Bernard followed the conventional understanding in seeing Joseph neither as real father of Jesus nor husband of Mary, but his opening to the emotional bonds between Joseph and Jesus are harbingers of a new appreciation of Joseph as father and husband.[82]

Space does not allow any review of the Homilies or of Bernard's other writings (but see Mette Birkedal Bruun's article in this volume). Even our quick glance at the text, however, indicates the freshness of his approach and the vitality of his interpretations. Bernard's total embrace of scriptural language and powerful verbal images enabled him to renew theological discourse. What we find is once again monastic theology, careful meditation on the meaning of the Scriptures, based on the practice of *lectio*, which leads to insight and even wisdom.

First Manifestations of a Public Role 1121–25

Once he was released from his year of external supervision, Bernard quickly began to commit himself to various enterprises outside of Clairvaux. In 1121 the house's third daughter, Foigny, was founded.[83] According to William, Bernard's return to an ascetic regime brought on new outbreaks of illness, amid "that persistent eruption from his ruined stomach, with the undigested raw matter coming up through his mouth." These attacks bothered the brothers in choir so much that a receptacle was dug on the floor next to where the abbot stood so that he could here deposit his involuntary waste products. But this arrange-

---

[80] *Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. Marie-Bernard Saïd (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. 6. This translation has an excellent introduction by Chrysogonus Waddell.

[81] *Homilies* II.16, trans. p. 28; SBO 4, p. 34.

[82] McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2005), pp. 235–239.

[83] Holdsworth, "The Early Writings" (note 67 above), p. 31.

ment apparently did not function, and Bernard had to stay away from choir, an indication of how serious his condition must have been.[84]

William seems to have tried to compensate for this weakness by pointing out how Bernard's problems did not keep him from attracting many men from the world to the monastery or solving problems in the Church.[85] It is here that he introduces Bernard's ministry to the Church in general: "At times obedience withdrew him yet further from the monastery, for public causes within the Church."[86]

Before moving out into the secular Church, however, Bernard committed himself to the monastic one, and here it was William himself who seemed to convince him to get involved. Sometime between 1121 and 1125, and perhaps in 1122, Bernard wrote his *Apologia to Abbot William*, ostensibly an attack on Cluny for its ostentatious architectural and artistic decoration, but perhaps also a criticism of Cîteaux itself for its richly decorated manuscripts that to this day delight the eye.[87] On the surface Bernard called for unity: "Let there be no division within the Church."[88] But Bernard, like the other early founders of the Cistercian Order, yearned back to a better time: "when the monastic Order began, who would have dreamed that monks could become so slack? Oh, how far away we have moved from Anthony and his contemporaries."[89]

Bernard ended his apology with a brief consideration of what to do with monks who come to the Cistercians from other observances and then leave.[90] At about the same time as he was writing these lines, he was trying to cope with the case of his cousin Robert, who had been promised by his parents to Cluny but had joined the Cistercians. Robert came to regret his decision, perhaps because of the extreme asceticism, and left for Cluny. The letter Bernard wrote to Robert was placed by Geoffrey of Auxerre at the very head of his letter collection,

---

[84] PL 185:250, VP 1.39, Cawley, p. 39.
[85] PL 185:250, VP 1.40.
[86] PL 185:251, VP 1.42, Cawley, p. 41.
[87] Holdsworth, "The Early Writings" (note 67 above), pp. 48–52. Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance." Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Towards Art* (Philadelphia, 1990). Also Diane Reilly's article in this volume.
[88] SBO 3, pp. 81–108, esp. 86 (III.6): "Non ergo dividatur, sed totam et integram hereditario iure sortiatur Ecclesia…" Trans. Michael Casey, *Cistercians and Cluniacs: St Bernard's Apologia to Abbot William*, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux 1. Treatises 1* (Shannon, Ireland, 1970), p. 41.
[89] SBO 3, p. 96 (IX.19), trans. p. 54.
[90] *Apologia* XII.31, SBO 3, p. 107, trans. pp. 68–69.

for it provides in essence the abbot's ideals concerning the monastic life.[91] At the same time, however, it shows the young abbot already at the peak of his capacity as a writer who could use every literary device and human emotion in order to plead, cajole, flatter, threaten, and overwhelm his correspondent. Bernard could be bitingly satirical, but at times he appears just angry, outraged that his close relative could have abandoned the Cistercian life: "You foolish boy! Who has bewitched you to break the vows which adorned your lips? Will you not be justified or condemned out of your own mouth? Why then are you so anxious about the vow your parents made and yet so regardless of your own?"[92]

If we had nothing else from Bernard's hand, this letter alone would have given him a reputation as a master of literary artifice and a defender of monastic life. A similar involvement can be seen in the letters written from the summer of 1124 to Abbot Arnold of Morimond. Arnold had gotten the bright idea of taking a contingent of his monks to the Holy Land to establish a foundation there. Bernard replied that Arnold as abbot was obliged to remain in his monastery and look after his community. He had no business in Palestine, which was not a place for Cistercian monasticism.[93]

Bernard's involvement in the decision of the Morimond abbot came without the blessing or apparently even knowledge of the father abbot of Cîteaux, Stephen. Bernard justified his intervention because the abbot of Cîteaux was away on business in Flanders.[94] Whatever Stephen's position, Bernard had no right to attack his fellow abbot. The whole matter was delicate, for Cîteaux itself had been founded by an abbot who had left his community at Molesme and emigrated to the New Monastery with some of the monks. Now it seemed imperative for Abbot Stephen to make his entrance, and he must have done

---

[91] SBO 7, epistola 1, pp. 1–11, trans. Bruno Scott James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 1998), pp. 1–10. I use the translation of James from 1953 in its new edition with a new introduction by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and revised dates for some of the letters, according to the notes provided by Ferruccio Gastaldelli in the Italian edition of Bernard. I have found the table of letters, recipients, and dates (pp. 538–552 in Kienzle) extremely helpful. Here, as in so much else in Bernard's life, many dates can be only tentative.

[92] SBO 7, p. 7; James, *Letters*, p. 6.

[93] SBO 7, pp. 24–27; James, Letter 4, pp. 19–22.

[94] SBO 7, p. 24; James, *Letters*, p. 20: "Primo scire te volo domnum Cisterciensem, necdum quando tuus nuntius ad nos venit, de Flandria, quo paulo ante per nos transierat, remeasse…" See Casey, "Bernard and the Crisis at Morimond," note 59 above.

so, for Bernard pursued the matter and referred to the authority of the Cistercian Order. As he wrote to the monk Adam, a follower of Arnold, in excoriating him for his lack of monastic stability: "while it is true I was professed a monk of Cîteaux in that place and was sent by the abbot to live where I do, yet I was sent in peace, without any scandal or discord, according to the customs and common observance of our Order."[95] The Bernard who emerges from this correspondence was aware of the existence of the Cistercians as a separate and discrete order within monasticism. He insisted on binding legal obligations as a result of the structure that Stephen of Cîteaux had assembled, especially in the *Carta caritatis*.[96]

Probably in 1125 Bernard had to cope with a new outbreak of his illness "with a stream of phlegm flowing almost ceaselessly from his mouth."[97] When he was at his worst, he had a dream or vision of coming before God's tribunal, with Satan trying to claim him. Bernard's reply to the devil was so apt that it was included in the *Golden Legend*'s portrait of him.[98] He said that he had a double claim to salvation, thanks to Jesus, "by inheritance from his Father and by merit of what he suffered. Since he contents himself with the first claim, he concedes the other to me."[99] The theology of grace could not be better summarized, and it is no accident that Martin Luther felt especially drawn to Bernard's writings.[100]

William described how he came to Clairvaux at this time. He answered Bernard's summons, for William was also ill, and the two of them could in their sickbeds discuss the Song of Songs, on which Bernard intended to write a commentary.[101] When William felt better and announced his imminent departure, Bernard was displeased and asked God to cause his friend to have a relapse. However Bernard's reaction

---

[95] SBO 7, Ep. 7.16, p. 43; James, Letter 7.16, p. 35.

[96] Brian McGuire, "Bernard's Concept of a Cistercian Order: Vocabulary and Context," *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 54 (2003), 225–249, my response to the claim of Constance Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution. The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, 2000), that the Order did not exist before the death of Bernard. Bernard's letters show that he conceived of himself as being member of a well-organized monastic order based on Cîteaux.

[97] PL 185:258, VP 1.57, Cawley, p. 50.

[98] *Legenda Aurea* (note 53 above), p. 533.

[99] PL 185:258, VP 1.57, Cawley, p. 51.

[100] Bernhard Lohse, "Luther und Bernhard von Clairvaux," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Rezeption und Wirkung* (note 54 above), pp. 271–301.

[101] PL 185:259, VP 1.59

is to be understood, it illustrates his strength of will and insistence on control: "A bit of quieting down would be good," he said to William, "You won't be dying as yet."[102]

Few if any events in Bernard's life can be related to the years 1125–27. He may have needed this time to recover from whatever it was that was ailing him (certainly anorexia cannot be ruled out). It would be a delight if we had a contemporary account of Bernard's everyday life at Clairvaux, if he ever enjoyed such a thing. Instead we have the record of his struggles in the Church and his miracles. The latter have generally been ignored in recent historical accounts of Bernard. Christopher Holdsworth has tried to understand Bernard's miracles in his own terms, as manifestations of power meant to bring people to God.[103] In this article I barely touch on the miracles, except to point out how his uncle Gaudry and eldest brother Guy at first excoriated Bernard for them and tried to stop them: "They spared no harsh words to shake up his tender sensitivity to shame: his best deeds they slandered; his signs, one and all they reduced to naught; and the man himself, so meek, so little given to answering back, they frequently taunted and abused even to tears."[104]

William explained the behaviour of the relatives as a result of "spiritual solicitude" because Bernard was young and unproven in the monastic life. I wonder if there also was an element of jealousy or insecurity about living under an abbot who belonged to the next world. William's account indicates unease with Bernard's behaviour, but it quickly turns into a listing of one miracle after another. The irony is that uncle Gaudry later on, when ill, appealed to Bernard for help. Bernard reminded him of how he once had treated him, but Gaudry begged for assistance, and his nephew and abbot made certain he was cured and able to live on for a number of years at Clairvaux.[105]

---

[102] PL 185:260, VP 1.60, Cawley, p. 54: "'Quiescite ergo,' ait, 'non moriemini modo.' Et abiit."

[103] "Reading the Signs: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Miracles," in *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250. Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006), pp. 161–172. See also the systematic treatment by André Picard, *La thaumaturgie de Bernard de Clairvaux d'après les* Vitae (Université de Montréal, 1991).

[104] PL 185:253, VP 1.45, Cawley, p. 43.

[105] PL 185:254. VP 1.46, Cawley, p. 44.

First Involvements Outside the Order 1128–29

Bernard involved himself in the formation of a new monastic order at the Council of Troyes in 1129.[106] Here he accepted the Order of Knights Templar, whose purpose was to fight for Christ in the Holy Land. The monastic vocation, which traditionally had been seen as the antithesis to the knightly one, was made available for those who made war. Bernard, who had done his utmost to keep Cistercian monks away from Palestine, now encouraged a new order of monk-soldiers to go there. His *In Praise of the New Knighthood* can be mined for passages promising salvation to those who kill the infidel, but it should also be understood in terms of its reverence for the holy places of Christianity.[107] For Bernard the Holy Land was more a state of mind and spiritual exaltation than a concrete place. His absorption of the language of the Bible made Jerusalem into an allegory rather than a worldly city. In this way Bernard later could preach the Second Crusade, in imaging an idealized reality rather than a military goal.

At about the same time as he wrote on behalf of the new order, Bernard composed a strictly theological work, *On Grace and Free Choice*.[108] It was addressed to his intellectual partner of these years, William of Saint Thierry, probably the most insightful monastic expert on grace and free will. If we consider Bernard's situation at this time, in seeking to make choices that involved a departure from the "normal" life of a monk and abbot, then the question of grace is especially relevant for this phase of his existence. Grace provides the foundation for freedom of choice: in following the gift of grace, the freedom of choice is expanded.[109] For Bernard it was imperative to choose in accepting the grace freely given by God. The more he committed himself to the public sphere, the more he had to combine grace and free choice.

---

[106] Dal Prà, *Cronologia* (note 34 above) writes 1128, while Pierre Aubé, *Saint Bernard* (note 19 above) has 1129. See his helpful chapter, "Le concile de Troyes," pp. 194–201. Also the important article by R. Hiestand, "Kardinalbischof Matthaüs von Albano, das Konzil von Troyes und die Entstehung des Tempelordens," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 99 (1988), 295–325.

[107] *De laude novae militiae*, SBO 3, pp. 213–239. Trans. Conrad Greenia in *Bernard of Clairvaux, Treatises* III (Kalamazoo, 1977), pp. 127–167. See Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood. A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), pp. 45–51.

[108] *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, SBO 3, pp. 165–203. Trans. Daniel O'Donovan in the same volume as *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, pp. 51–111.

[109] *De gratia* 1.2, p. 167. Trans. pp. 54–55.

Public affairs became a natural theatre of commitment for Bernard when in 1128 he wrote to the royal chancellor Suger, abbot of Saint Denis, and congratulated him for reforming his monastery and way of life. The letter contains a strong attack on Stephen of Garland, the archdeacon of Notre Dame cathedral and royal seneschal: "Although he is archdeacon, deacon and provost in many churches, none of these titles gives him so much pleasure as seneschal to his majesty the king. What a novel and odious perversity it is that a man should think it more becoming to be known as a retainer of another man than a servant of God."[110] Bernard seems to have chosen to ignore the fact that the same dualism of office existed for his correspondent. Suger passed muster because of his reform efforts, but he remained next to the king the most powerful figure in the kingdom.

In 1129 a church council was held at Châlons-sur-Marne where Bernard was present. He succeeded in convincing Henry, bishop of Verdun, to give up his office because of accusations of simony: "I was present, I do not deny it, but I was summoned and dragged there."[111] Bernard had been recruited by the reforming party in the Church that sought to rid it of bishops and others who had bought their offices. This reform effort had been taking place since the papacy of Gregory VII (1073–85) but had only been partly successful. The letter in which Bernard defended his actions at the council was written to cardinal Haimeric, papal chancellor, and was meant to answer criticism of Bernard's actions for leaving his monastery and neglecting his position: "Is it my whole and only fault that I was present on those occasions, I who am only fit to live hidden away, I who am my own judge, accuser and witness of my life, to see that my actions become my profession and that the name I bear of monk is justified by my solitary existence?"[112]

Bernard seems to have been aware of the rumours that persisted. His defence was that others "dragged" him into the disputes such as those which took place at Châlons. He was sufficiently concerned about his reputation that he spent time and effort to write the papal chancellor. By the late 1120s he thus had contacts at the French and papal courts.

---

[110] SBO 7, Ep. 78.11, p. 208; James, Letter 80, p. 117. See Lindy Grant, *Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis* (London and New York, 1998).

[111] SBO 7, Ep. 48, p. 138. James, Letter 51, p. 80.

[112] Ibid.: "An tota et sola culpa mea est quod affui, homo solis latebris dignus, soli mihi iudex, soli accusator et arbiter constitutus, quatenus actio quod habet professio, et nomen monachi solitaria mihi conversatio interpretetur?"

Even though he claimed to be "only fit to live hidden away," his letters brought his actions to the attention of the men who were exercising authority at the top level of Church and society.

A Leading Figure in the Papal Schism 1130–38

In 1130 the Western Church was split by a schism in which two men claimed to be pope. One of them came from a distinguished Roman family, the Pierleoni (Anacletus II), while the other came from the Roman family of the Guidoni (Innocent II).[113] The schism was a turning point in Bernard's life, for during its duration he travelled extensively in Aquitaine and Italy in order to negotiate with churchmen and lay figures to convince them that the true successor to Saint Peter and bearer of the keys of the kingdom of heaven was Innocent, not Anacletus.

The first indication of Bernard's involvement was a council held at Etampes, south of Paris, at the end of August or early September 1130. According to the English historian Watkin Williams, whose biography of Bernard remains a mine of information, "it was at the Council of Etampes that St. Bernard's influence first began to be widely felt."[114] Our primary account is from the second book of the *Vita Prima*. According to its author, the Benedictine abbot Ernald of Bonneval, Bernard arrived in "fear and trembling," aware of the danger and the heavy task before him (*non mediocriter pavidus et tremebundus advenit, periculum quippe et pondus negotii non ignorans*), but on the way he was granted a vision of the Church with unity re-established.[115]

A letter to the bishops of Aquitaine from 1131 expresses Bernard's conviction that action had to be taken. He opens his peroration with a summons to courage: "The time has come, most reverend and holy fathers, for you to take courage, if you have any, and to bestir yourselves to action. Once more the sword of the enemy seems to be threatening

---

[113] A splendid overview is found in Mary Stroll, *The Jewish Pope: Ideology and Politics in the Papal Schism of 1130* (Leiden, 1987). A review of Bernard's involvements can be found in all the modern biographies. The best of these treatments is to be found in Watkin Williams, *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Manchester, Eng. 1935, repr. Westminster, Maryland, 1952), ch. 5–7.

[114] Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 106. Note, however, that Louis VI had already decided for Innocent II. See Timothy Reuter, "Zur Anerkennung Papst Innocenz II," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 39 (1983), 395–416.

[115] PL 185:279, VP 2.3. Martinus Cawley has unfortunately translated only a small part of the Second Book of the VP, so the following translations are my own.

death to the whole body of Christ."[116] Here there are no hesitation, no apologies, no explanations that a mere abbot is summoning bishops to action. Bernard seems to have overcome all his doubts about staying off in a corner and letting the world carry on with its misdoings. He had clearly accepted a role that hardly can be reconciled with that of abbot of a monastery in a contemplative order. Bernard had become, as he called himself in 1150, a fabled being composed of different creatures and no longer living the life of a monk: "I am a sort of modern chimaera, neither cleric nor layman. I have kept the habit of a monk, but I have long ago abandoned the life."[117]

In 1132 Innocent II returned to Italy and within a few months called upon Bernard to join him there. Bernard met Innocent at Pisa, where he helped secure a peace treaty between the rival cities Pisa and Genoa. After visiting Genoa, he wrote in 1134 to its "consuls, councillors and all the people" a letter encouraging them "to continue as you have begun."[118] He wanted the city to support Innocent, remain on good terms with Pisa, and resist the temptation to join King Roger II of Sicily, the main defender of Anacletus in the Italian peninsula: "It were better for you to work off your warlike spirit by subduing the enemies of the Church and defending your own honour against the Sicilians."[119] The next letter went to the "consuls, councillors and citizens of Pisa," warning them against "the Sicilian tyrant" and encouraging them to show reverence for the rightful pope, "your father and the father of the whole world."[120]

Bernard reveals himself in such letters as a political strategist, seeking to create alliances between Italian cities which were used to warring with each other. It is strange to think of the son of Burgundian nobles who had been tied to the land, a man who had renounced the world by going into a monastery, now functioning amid the urban and to some degree secular climate of Northern Italy. But Bernard was willing to write anyone whom he thought stood in the way of the recognition of Innocent as rightful "father of the whole world." When King Louis VI forbade his bishops to attend a council that Innocent had called at Pisa for May 1135, Bernard wrote him: "The kingdoms of this world and

[116] SBO 7, Ep. 126, p. 309; James, Letter 129, p. 191.
[117] SBO 8, Ep. 250.4, p. 147; James, Letter 326.4, p. 402.
[118] SBO 7, Ep. 129.2, p. 323; James, Letter 131.2, p. 200.
[119] SBO 7, Ep. 129.3, p. 324; James, Letter 131.3, p. 201.
[120] SBO 7, Ep. 130, p. 325; James, Letter 132, p. 202.

their prerogatives will certainly only remain sound and unimpaired for their lords so long as they do not contravene the divine ordinances and dispositions."[121]

In the spring of 1133 Bernard accompanied Innocent to Viterbo. At the end of April Innocent entered Rome, where he took possession of the Lateran, while Anacletus maintained his hold on the basilica of Saint Peter. On 4 June Innocent crowned King Lothar of Germany Holy Roman Emperor. Meanwhile Bernard had returned to Clairvaux: he apparently did not witness Innocent's partial victory.[122]

In 1134 Roger of Sicily was successful in conquering most of Southern Italy, and so Anacletus could hold out in Rome in the hope that his champion would reach him. Bernard intervened for a second time in Aquitaine because of the schism, and his involvement here is described in detail by Ernald of Bonneval in the second book of the *Vita Prima*. In this account Bernard asked to speak to Count William, who promised him he could accept Innocent as pope but could not restore the bishops whom he had exiled. The discussion was getting nowhere when Bernard went into a nearby church in order to pray. Mass was said, and then the abbot took the host and held it before the count: "We asked you and you showed us contempt…Now the Virgin's Son comes to you, he who is lord and master of this Church which you persecute. Your judge is here…Do you dare reject even him?"[123]

Whether or not Bernard used these exact words is irrelevant. What Ernald illustrates here is the abbot's ability to make use of charismatic powers in order to create a social drama in which he claimed to incarnate the will of God. This episode certainly belongs to the genre of hagiography, but it manages to convey the immense spiritual power of Bernard in influencing his surroundings. Another demonstration of Bernard's attractiveness appears in Ernald's description of his return from Italy. When he crossed the Alps shepherds and peasants came to him and called out asking for his blessing. At Langres, the episcopal seat, the brothers of Clairvaux came to meet him. They fell on their knees and rose in order to kiss him. At the monastery all the brothers

---

[121] SBO 8, Ep. 255, p. 161; James, Letter 133, p. 203.

[122] See Dal Prà, *Cronologia* (note 34 above), pp. 28–30.

[123] PL 185:290, VP 2.38: "Rogavimus te, inquit, et sprevisti nos…Ecce ad te processit Filius Virginis, qui est caput et Dominus Ecclesiae, quam tu persequeris. Adest judex tuus…Nunquid et ipsum spernes?"

were gathered together "and with wondrous devotion they receive the beloved father."[124]

Ernald insists in this description of the abbot's return that in Bernard's absence from Clairvaux the devil could make no headway: *in tanta abbatis mora nihil in Claravalle potuit diabolus texere*. We have a very few letters Bernard wrote to its brothers in telling them how painful it was for him to be absent from them.[125] It is difficult to believe that Bernard could leave his monastery for such long periods without there being problems of discipline and leadership. It is possible that his biological brothers such as Andrew took over and kept a lid on any dissension, but a story from the later *Exordium magnum Cisterciense*, describing how Bernard three times returned to Clairvaux in visions, reveals how hard it was for the brothers to accept his prolonged absences.[126]

During the mid-1130s while Bernard was at Clairvaux, he was compelled to deal with the affairs of the monastery. The buildings had become too cramped in the valley where they were situated, and the church hardly had room for all the brothers. There was also an insufficient water supply, and it seemed necessary to move the entire complex further down the valley, so that the brothers would be closer to the river and better able to draw on it.[127] If medieval Cistercians were good at anything, it was at ensuring running water for all their needs. Bernard, however, at first refused to consider the idea of moving. He objected: "We see that the stone buildings have already required great expense and much hard work."[128] If we tear down these buildings, Bernard claimed, then "the children of the world" (lay people) will think badly of the monks "because we are superficial and seek change, or also they will be able to say that the great wealth which we do not own makes us take leave of our senses."[129]

---

[124] PL 185:283–84, VP 2.28.

[125] SBO 7, Ep. 143, 144, pp. 342–346; James, Letters 144, 146, pp. 212–213, 214–215.

[126] *Exordium magnum*, ed. Griesser (note 58 above), dist. 2, cap. 11, pp. 104–105: "Quod venerabilis pater, cum aliquando in partibus Italiae tribus annis moraretur, tribus etiam vicibus Claramvallem suam in spiritu visitavit."

[127] See Terryl Kinder, "Les églises médiévales de Clairvaux: Probabilités et fiction," in *Histoire de Clairvaux. Actes du Colloque* (Association Renaissance de l'Abbaye de Clairvaux: Bar-sur-Aube, 1992), pp. 204–229.

[128] PL 185:285, VP 2.29: "Videmus quia multis expensis et sudoribus jam domus lapideae consummatae sunt."

[129] Ibid.: "Si haec omnia confregerimus, poterunt homines saeculi male de nobis sentire, quod aut leves sumus et mutabiles; aut nimiae, quae tamen non habemus, divitiae nos faciunt insanire."

Bernard reminded the brothers that they did not have the funds for such an expensive project and reminded them of the passage in Luke (14:30) about the man who began to build and could not complete the work. The brothers, according to Ernald, answered that if God had stopped sending new recruits to the monastery, then the abbot's view would prevail. But since God "daily" increased his flock at Clairvaux, either the new men were to be sent away or else they were to have a place where they could be. "Let it not be that we because of fear of the expense" abandon the whole thing![130]

This episode deserves particular attention because it emphasizes, as Ernald himself pointed out, that Bernard could engage in a dialogue with his monks. He could sometimes (*aliquando*) give way to their counsels (*consiliis*). Also interesting is his apparent concern for what lay people might think of the monks' building program. Bernard is usually portrayed in the hagiographical literature as fearless and unconcerned about the opinion of the world. But in this matter he is shown as being both timid and wrong: if Clairvaux had not been allowed to recreate itself, the monastery would have been in serious trouble!

In 1135 Bernard left Clairvaux for the Diet of Bamberg, held on 17 March. His purpose, according to Geoffrey of Auxerre, was to make peace between King Lothar and the nephews of his predecessor, Emperor Henry V.[131] From here Bernard apparently went directly to Italy for his second journey south of the Alps. His immediate concern was the archbishopric of Milan and its allegiance.[132] He wrote some potential novices there that he was on his way to Pisa but would visit them on his return: "If there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, how much greater joy will there be over the conversion of so many men like you of such a great city as yours."[133] At Pisa at the end of May and early June for a council with Innocent, Bernard did return to Milan and here founded the first Cistercian house in Italy, Chiaravalle Milanese.[134] Ernald describes with his usual drama all the

[130] PL 185:285, VP 2.30: "Absit autem ut pro diffidentia sumptuum confusionis hujus incurramus discrimina!"
[131] PL 185:329–30, VP 3.14. See Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 136.
[132] SBO 7, epp. 132, 133, 137, pp. 328–329, 333. James, Letters 134, 138, 140, pp. 204, 207, 208–209.
[133] SBO 7, Ep. 134, p. 330. James, Letter 134, p. 204.
[134] Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 50.

miracles Bernard performed at Milan, in terms of cures and casting out of demons.[135]

Further travels to Pavia, Cremona, and Piacenza were made in the cause of Innocent. Bernard intended to return to Clairvaux, but Innocent asked him to go back to Milan, a city whose allegiance was crucial to the pope.[136] By November 1135, however, Bernard was back at Clairvaux, and it was probably now, at the beginning of Advent, that he preached his first Sermon on the Song of Songs.[137] The 86 sermons based on the first chapters of the Song are surely Bernard's literary masterpiece, in which he used the erotic imagery of the Song to describe the soul's love for God. However difficult it may be to read these sermons and fathom their imagery, they reward patient attention.[138] As Bernard wrote at the end of his first Sermon on the Song: "Only the touch of the Spirit can inspire a song like this, and only personal experience can unfold its meaning."[139] Bernard conveyed to his monks the conviction that the lived experience of the individual could be linked to the language of Scripture and open a rich spiritual universe.

From February 1136 Bernard was again away from Clairvaux.[140] He was travelling in Italy for the third time with his brother Gerard. In April the imperial contingent moved towards Rome, and in May the troops of Henry of Bavaria were in the area of Monte Cassino between Naples and Rome. At Viterbo, probably in March or April 1137, Gerard became ill. Bernard prayed for his recovery, and Gerard revived.[141] The conquest of Salerno south of Naples meant that King Roger of Sicily was now on the defensive, but he was not defeated. Bernard had to remain in Italy and tried to negotiate with Roger. On 30 October 1137

---

[135] PL 185:273–80, VP 2.9–20.

[136] PL 185:273, VP 2.9.

[137] SBO 1, p. xv.

[138] Michael Casey, *A Thirst for God. Spiritual Desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, 1988) provides a superb contemporary guide. Also helpful is Denys Turner, *Eros and Allegory. Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, 1995).

[139] SBO 1, Sermo 1.VI.11, p. 7: "Istiusmodi canticum sola unctio docet, sola addiscit experientia." *On the Song of Songs*, vol. 3, trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, 1977), p. 6.

[140] Dal Prà, *Cronologia* (note 34 above), p. 35.

[141] SC 26.14: "So I began to pray in the midst of my tears and said: 'Wait O Lord, till we return home. Let me give him back to his friends, then take him if you wish, and I shall not complain." *On the Song of Songs*, trans. Walsh (note 139 above), p. 73. See Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), pp. 148–149.

Roger was defeated.[142] Bernard followed his withdrawal and met with the king of Sicily at the end of November or early December.

Bernard accompanied Innocent II to Rome, but the forces of Anacletus still held the quarter around Saint Peter's. The schism could have continued indefinitely, even though Anacletus by now basically only had a parcel of Rome and Southern Italy. But the man whom history calls an anti-pope died on 25 January 1138. Bernard wrote soon after to Abbot Peter the Venerable of Cluny and rejoiced in what he thought was the end of the schism: "I am also proud of my troubles, if I may be counted worthy to suffer them for the sake of the Church. But most of all it is the triumph of the Church of which I am proud and which keeps my head erect."[143] It is unusual to find Bernard in such a victorious mood, but he must certainly have been anticipating the joy of returning to Clairvaux with his brother Gerard.

The supporters of Anacletus elected a successor, who took the name Victor IV, but he soon reconciled with Innocent and recognized his authority. On 29 May 1138 Rome became the city of Innocent alone. As Bernard wrote to Geoffrey, Clairvaux's prior, "At last the peace has come which I felt so sure would come…Now nothing remains to keep me here any longer."[144] Back at Clairvaux, Bernard had to face the death of Gerard. His lament over him was incorporated into one of his *Sermons on the Song of Songs* (26) and makes up one of the most eloquent expressions of love, friendship, and brotherhood that we have from the Middle Ages. The Bernard who as a young man had told the brothers that they had to leave their bodies outside now allowed his own body to issue forth tears and sighs because his brother was no longer at his side.

Although he spent the better part of the 1130s away from Clairvaux, Bernard still involved himself not only in its building program but also in controversies over elections to bishoprics. After the death of the local bishop at Langres in 1136, Bernard was consulted concerning his successor.[145] When the candidate of Peter the Venerable was elected, Bernard protested. He was offered the office but instead favoured the prior of Clairvaux, Geoffrey, who was elected on 28 October 1138. In this matter as in other episcopal elections, Bernard exerted influence

---

[142] PL 185:293–94, VP 2.44. Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 152.
[143] SBO 7, Ep. 147, p. 216; James, Letter 147, p. 216.
[144] SBO 8, Ep. 317, p. 250; James, Letter 148, p. 217.
[145] Dal Prà, *Cronologia* (note 34 above), p. 39.

without qualms and backed Cistercian candidates. We find him writing Pope Innocent II and complaining about the initial election at Langres: "As I crossed the Alps news reached me that a man had been chosen for the see of Langres of whom I could have wished that I had heard better reports, and that a day in the near future had been settled for the consecration."[146]

At Reims Bernard was offered the archbishopric but refused. To King Louis VII of France Bernard wrote, "No one is better known to me than myself, no one knows me so well as I know myself" (*Nemo mihi me notior, nemini ego quam mihi*).[147] Such self-knowledge made Bernard turn down the position. We might say that he could exercise greater authority in his world as a simple abbot than as a bishop attached to the interests of one diocese. In any case Bernard rejected the bishoprics offered him but at the same time made sure that Clairvaux Cistercians in several instances gained them, as we can see from Ernald's list.[148]

Possibly at some time in the later part of the 1130s Bernard may have composed what is perhaps his most attractive theological treatise, *On Loving God*, which he dedicated to the papal chancellor, Cardinal Haimeric. He begins with the playful but serious assertion: "You wish me to tell you why and how God should be loved. My answer is that God himself is the reason why he is to be loved."[149]

Another treatise from these years, possibly as late as 1141–43, is *On Precept and Dispensation*, a brilliant summary of obedience and free choice especially in monastic life but applicable elsewhere, as the late medieval theologian Jean Gerson discovered.[150] Bernard points out that the Rule of Saint Benedict is not an absolute; the monastic profession has its limitations.

---

[146] SBO 7, Ep. 164.2, p. 373; James, Letter 179.2, p. 250.

[147] SBO 8, Ep. 449, p. 426; James, Letter 210, p. 286.

[148] PL 185:297, VP 2.49.

[149] *De diligendo deo*, SBO 3, p. 119 (for dating, see the introduction, p. 112). Trans. Robert Walton in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux. Treatises II* (Washington D.C., 1974), p. 91.

[150] *De praecepto et dispensatione*, SBO 3, pp. 253–294; for dating, p. 244. Trans. Conrad Greenia, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux. Treatises I*, pp. 103–150. See Brian McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2005), p. 156.

Doctrinal Controversies and Political Disputes 1139–45

Bernard's travels were far from over, but I doubt that in April 1139 he joined 800 prelates for the Second Lateran Council in Rome, to mark the end of the schism and the continuation of the process of clerical reformation that had begun in the second half of the previous century. He would not have accepted the decisions of the council, which quashed all priestly ordinations made by former supporters of Anacletus and made no exceptions.[151] We have at least one letter from Bernard to Innocent, probably from 1139, in which he made it clear that he disagreed with Innocent's vindictiveness: "For the sake of him who, that he might spare sinners, did not spare himself, remove this reproach against me and, by reinstalling him whom you have once installed, honour your first and unbiased decision."[152]

At this time, probably in Lent of 1140, William of Saint Thierry contacted Bernard with a warning about the theology of Peter Abelard. Bernard's reply, formed as a letter but also known as *Tractatus contra capitula errorum Petri Abaelardi*, is a masterpiece of invective, challenging the trinitarian definitions of Abelard and undermining his understanding of the Redemption as a pure act of love.[153] Traditionally 1140 has been the date given for the council at Sens that, because of Bernard, condemned Abelard without giving him a chance to defend himself, but thanks to the work of Pietro Zerbi and Constant Mews we now know it must have taken place the following year.[154]

Bernard clearly came to Sens in a fighting mood: we have the letter he wrote to the bishops of the archdiocese using the same kind of military language that Peter Abelard himself had employed in his

---

[151] Dal Prà, *Cronologia* (note 34 above), p. 40, claims Bernard was at the council but provides no source. For the decisions of the Council, see Joseph Alberigo, *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta* (Basil, 1962), as p. 179, §30: "Ad haec ordinationes factas a Petro Leonis et aliis schismaticis et haereticis evacuamus et irritas esse censemus." For a more careful chronological table for Bernard, see the section in *Bernard de Clairvaux* (Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux: Paris, 1953), pp. 567–614, esp. p. 593.

[152] SBO 8, Ep. 213, p. 74; James, Letter 283, p. 354.

[153] SBO 8, Ep. 190, pp. 17–40, unfortunately not trans. by James. See the article of Constant Mews in this collection. Professor Mews has written me: "The crucial event is that at the Second Lateran Council (April 1139) Arnold of Brescia was expelled from Italy and goes to France, and attaches himself to Abelard, where he makes common cause with Cardinal Hyacinth Bobbone against Bernard (according to John of Salisbury)."

[154] See Constant Mews's article in this volume, especially footnote 1.

Historia Calamitatum. As Bernard ended his brief but telling missive: "Do not wonder that I have called upon you so suddenly and at such short notice, for it is a part of the cunning and shrewd design of our opponents to attack us while we are unprepared and to engage us in battle while we are unprotected."[155]

It is well known that Abelard, after being condemned by the Council of Sens, sought refuge at Cluny and received the protection of its abbot, Peter the Venerable. As the historian Michael Clanchy has shown in his eminently readable biography of Abelard, Cluny's abbot seems to have arranged a reconciliation between Bernard and Abelard before the latter died on 21 April 1142.[156] In this affair it is difficult to take seriously the assertion of Bernard that he was defending the faith, for he clearly did not understand the way Abelard reasoned. But it should be remembered that he was responding to a summons by his close friend and biographer, William of Saint Thierry, who might be considered the outstanding monastic theologian of the century.

During the 1140s Bernard involved himself in another controversy that also is difficult to accept, except for the fact that here too he seems to have been following the advice of trusted friends. After the death of the archbishop of York, Thurstan, in 1140, a nephew of King Stephen of Blois, William Fitzherbert, was elected to succeed him. There were rumours of simony, and the case was appealed to Rome. In 1147 Fitzherbert was opposed and replaced by Henry Murdac, then abbot of Fountains and formerly a monk of Clairvaux.[157]

Bernard did what he could to influence events, writing to the pope and to others well placed in his vicinity.[158] Bernard sent ambassadors to Innocent to challenge the York election—Aelred, monk of Rievaulx, and Walter of London, the archdeacon of York. As he wrote, "These men whom you see before you are true, honest and God-fearing. They have been led by the spirit of God into your august presence with the sole intention of seeing and obtaining justice."[159] In the end Henry

---

[155] SBO 8, Ep. 187, p. 10 ; James, Letter 237, p. 315: "Nec miremini, quod ita de subito et in arto temporis vos invitamus, quoniam hoc quoque adversa pars in sua versutia et calliditate providit, ut improvidos invaderet et congredi cogeret immunitos."

[156] M.T. Clanchy, *Abelard. A Medieval Life* (Oxford, 1999), p. 321.

[157] For a complete treatment, see Christopher Norton, *Saint William of York* (York, Eng., 2006).

[158] SBO 8, Ep. 346, 347, 525–529; James, Letters 187–192, pp. 261–265, with a long note of explanation, pp. 259–261.

[159] SBO 8, Ep. 347, p. 290; James, Letter 188, p. 262.

Murdac held office only a brief while, and he was replaced by William Fitzherbert, who after his death was venerated at York as a saint. The charge of simony never stuck, and Bernard clearly had overextended himself. While in the 1130s his reputation and actions earned him a central place in resolving the papal schism, he overextended himself in the 1140s and became involved in too many causes. Or at least so it seems when one tries to fathom the letters he left behind.

We find Bernard tireless in dealing with a longstanding conflict between King Louis VII of France and his vassal, Count Theobald of Champagne, who was feudal lord of Clairvaux and was key to the growth of the monastery and its protection from outside interference. Bernard quoted from the Psalms and the Gospels. He worked for a settlement between the count and the king, and he did not mince words in doing so. As he wrote to Louis: "Why do you want to add one sin upon another and heap up the wrath of God against yourself? What has Count Theobald done to deserve this recurrence of your anger?"[160]

Innocent died in September of 1143, and his successor, Celestine II, was pope only for a few months. In 1144 the new pope, Lucius II, did his best to reconcile King Louis VII by removing the interdict placed on him and decreeing the freedom of election for the sees of Châlons and Paris. A meeting was held at Saint Denis, under the auspices of the formidable Suger, royal chancellor, and its upshot was Louis's withdrawal of his troops from Champagne and his recognition of Peter de la Châtre as archbishop of Bourges. Louis promised to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[161] In return Count Theobald gave up his opposition to the marriage of Raoul de Vermandois and the French queen's sister. According to Geoffrey of Auxerre, Bernard had foreseen that the dispute between king and count would be over within five months: "Truly, on the last day of the fifth month peace was obtained, thanks to his prayers and actions, so that there can be no doubt that it was for the most part through his efforts and merits that this fine prince was freed from so many overhanging dangers."[162]

---

[160] SBO 8, Ep. 220.2; James, Letter 296.2.

[161] SBO 8, Ep. 225; James, Letter 301. Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), pp. 214–216. Also Radulfus de Diceto, *Imaginibus Historiarum*, in Martin Bouquet and Léopold Delisle, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, t. 13 (Paris, 1840–1904), p. 183.

[162] PL 185:329, VP 4.12. See Grant, *Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis* (note 110 above), pp. 149–152.

In 1143 or 1144 Bernard lost his brother Andrew. He continued to involve himself in the affairs of the world.[163] Evervin, the provost of Steinfeld in the Rhineland, wrote him in describing in detail a heretical sect whose members claimed to be the true followers of Jesus Christ: "…the heritage of Christ survives in them alone…because they do not seek the things of this world, houses or land or any other sort of property, just as Christ did not seek them, and did not allow his disciples to possess them."[164] Bernard's initial response came in his Sermons 65 and 66 on the Song of Songs. The next year Bernard journeyed not to the Rhineland but to Aquitaine to help combat what appears to have been an anticlerical heresy but may have been an outbreak of the same dualism that Evervin had deplored in his own neighbourhood. Bernard's enemy was Henry, a disciple of Peter of Bruys, who believed that baptism of infants should be abolished, all churches demolished, that Christ was not present in body and blood on the altar, and that prayers and alms for the dead are a waste. As Bernard wrote to the Count of Saint Gilles: "The grace of baptism is denied and Christian children are kept away from the life given by Christ."[165]

In the meantime Bernardo Paganelli, abbot of Tre Fontane, the Cistercian house near Rome founded as an expression of gratitude to Bernard, had been elected pope and had taken the name of Eugenius III. Two letters indicate that Bernard may have had contradictory feelings about the presence on the papal throne of a Cistercian.[166] Eugenius hardly had an opportunity to consider Bernard's views, for the Roman people rose up in revolt. Bernard wrote to them in excoriating their behaviour: "Why O Romans, why do you offend the princes of the world who are your special patrons? Why do you arouse against you the king of earth and the Lord of heaven, by your intolerable ravings and by attacking rashly and sacrilegiously the holy and apostolic see….?"[167]

Meanwhile, according to Geoffrey of Auxerre, Bernard converted many of those who had succumbed to heresy.[168] On 28 June 1145

---

[163] The possible years for Andrew's death are given in the "Table alphabetique" of *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 20 above), p. 697. Unfortunately no source is given.

[164] PL 182:678–79, trans. in R.I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (London, 1975), p. 75.

[165] SBO 8, Ep. 241.1, p. 125; James, Letter 317.1, p. 388.

[166] SBO 8, Ep. 237, 238, pp. 113–119; James, Letters 315 (pp. 385–386) and 205 (pp. 277–280).

[167] SBO 8, Ep. 243, pp. 130–134; James, Letter 319, pp. 391–394.

[168] PL 185:313–14, VP 3.18.

Bernard was at Albi and enjoyed success, while the papal legate Alberic apparently did not.[169] On his return to Clairvaux Bernard wrote one of his encyclicals to the people of Toulouse and claimed "Our stay was short, but the fruit of it was not small. When I made the truth clear to you, not only by word but also by power, the wolves who came amongst you in the guise of sheep and were devouring you like bread were found out."[170] Such assertions might seem to indicate that Bernard had succeeded in ridding the Midi of heresy, but its reappearance already in the same area in the 1160s would indicate that it merely went underground.

Meanwhile Eugenius III was negotiating with the Roman people in order to make it possible for him to return to the city. His initial success was marred by new disturbances in January 1146 that made it necessary for him again to flee the city. Arnold of Brescia, the renegade cleric who had been the bane of Innocent II in exciting the Roman populace to recreate the Roman republic, was back on the warpath.[171] As Bernard earlier had written to Cardinal Guy, legate in Bohemia: "It is reported that Arnold of Brescia is with you, the man whose life is as sweet as honey and whose doctrine is as bitter as poison, the man whom Brescia has ejected, Rome rejected, and France repulsed; whom Germany abhors, and Italy will not receive."[172] Bernard as ever was brilliant in his rhetoric, but considering Arnold's success in fomenting revolt, the abbot of Clairvaux perhaps for once was not exaggerating.

A Second Crusade and New Controversies 1146–49

On 1 March 1146 Pope Eugenius III reissued a bull from 1 December 1145 announcing a new crusade to the Holy Land.[173] Edessa had fallen in 1144, and there was a general sense in western Europe that the crusader states established after the fall of Jerusalem in 1099 were

---

[169] PL 185:414–16, a letter of Geoffrey of Auxerre included in what is called the sixth book of the *Vita Prima*, an account of Bernard's miracles.

[170] SBO 8, Ep. 242, pp. 128–129; James, Letter 318, pp. 389–391.

[171] For background, see George William Greenaway, *Arnold of Brescia* (Cambridge, Eng., 1931; repr. New York, 1978). See also John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis. Memoirs of the Papal Court*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (London, 1956), pp. 63–65, and Otto of Freising, *Die Taten Friedrichs*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale (Darmstadt, 1965), pp. 338–343.

[172] SBO 8, Ep. 196.1, p. 51; James, Letter 251.1, p. 331, dated to 1143.

[173] For background, Jonathan Phillips, *The Second Crusade. Extending the Frontiers of Christendom* (New Haven and London, 2007), esp. ch. 3 and 4.

in danger. Until this time Bernard had not involved himself in the politics or concerns of the Christian East. He had shown in the 1120s, as we saw above in his criticism of the abbot of Morimond, that Cistercian monks had no place in Palestine. His one concession to concern for this part of the world was his support for the establishment of the Knights Templar. Now, however, he accepted going to Vezelay, to the great pilgrimage church of Mary Magdalene, for a meeting scheduled for 31 March.

Unfortunately we do not have the address that Bernard is supposed to have given on the hill outside the church to the assembled knights of France, but he seems to have succeeded in rallying their spirits for the coming crusade.[174] The next few months until autumn he travelled to various French cities, together with other Cistercian abbots, including Reynald of Morimond, to convince others to take the cross. During this same period a renegade Cistercian monk, Rodolfus or Raoul, did his own crusade preaching in the Rhineland. He encouraged his listeners, before journeying to the Holy Land, first to root out the Jews, whom he said were responsible for killing Christ.

Bernard looked upon Raoul as a disobedient and disturbed monk who must at all costs be stopped. He wrote to the archbishop of Mainz and warned him against the outlaw: "I find three things most reprehensible in him: unauthorized preaching, contempt for episcopal authority, and incitation to murder."[175] Bernard read Scripture as guaranteeing a place for the Jews in the economy of salvation: "Otherwise, where does that saying come in, 'Not for their destruction I pray' (Ps. 58:12) and 'When the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then all Israel will be saved' Ps. 146:2)."[176] Bernard can be accused of a great deal, but he did champion Christian protection of the Jews from malicious and probably mad clerics like Raoul. In view of Gentile Europe's disastrous history of Jewish persecution, Bernard is an isolated point of light and hope.

In the autumn of 1146 Bernard continued his crusade preaching in Flanders, the Rhineland, and elsewhere in German lands. At the

---

[174] See the account of Odo of Deuil in his *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, trans. V.G. Berry (New York, 1948) and available on the internet at Medieval Sourcebook: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/odo-deuil.html; the Latin original is included in PL 185:1201–46, esp. col. 1207–08.

[175] SBO 8, Ep. 365, pp. 320–322, esp. 321; James, Letter 393.2, p. 465.

[176] PL 185:381–82.

end of November he met the emperor Conrad III at Frankfurt and asked him to take the cross. Conrad had enough on his plate: divisions in Germany, the hostility of Roger of Sicily, the Roman uprising. On 27 December at Speyer, Bernard used the celebration of the Mass to confront Conrad and convince him to take the cross. This time he succeeded.[177]

The record of Bernard's preaching in the Rhineland has been preserved by Geoffrey of Auxerre and other Cistercians. They kept a kind of diary of the healings and other miracles attributed to Bernard and which were intermingled with his preaching. This record takes up almost 50 columns in the *Patrologia latina* and is styled as the sixth book of the *Vita Prima*.[178] It appears to be one of the least known of the sources to Bernard's life, perhaps because it has been an embarrassment to modern biographers that Bernard is described in this flood of miracles: "From this time onwards shone forth numerous wonders done by divine power and even if we prefer to be silent, then the stones would shout about them. So we who were present have thought that it was best to write down these things in order to avoid confusion and remove doubt."[179] The method was to write the names of the individual witnesses, and so the list of miracles takes the form of a dialogue among those in Bernard's party. The miracles that were witnessed are described with a matter-of-fact brevity quite different from the usual hagiographical style. Abbot Frowin reported, for example, "There are only a few who saw what happened in Constance because of the huge crowd, but I saw a blind man who on Thursday had been healed before the altar…"[180]

In February 1147 Bernard returned to Clairvaux, but only for a few days, for on the sixteenth of the month he met at Etampes with Louis VII, the ambassadors of Conrad III, and Roger of Sicily.[181] The Sicilians offered naval transport, a much more secure way to the East than via the Byzantine Empire. Perhaps because of chronic distrust of Roger, it was decided to go via the land route.[182] In the absence of King Louis,

---

[177] PL 185:369–416: "Liber sextus seu miracula a sancto Bernardo per Germaniam, Belgium Galliamque patrata, anno 1146…"
[178] PL 185:373.
[179] PL 185:373.
[180] PL 185:378 (III.10).
[181] PL 185:404 (XIV.48–50).
[182] Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem* (note 174 above), PL 185:1208, and Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, pp. 116–117.

the administration of the realm was entrusted to Suger, abbot of Saint Denis. On 13 March Bernard and Peter the Venerable of Cluny were present at the Diet of Frankfurt, on the invitation of Conrad III. Here it was decided to engage in a military offensive against the pagan Slavs. Bernard subsequently issued a letter "to all the faithful of God" urging them to join this effort to make the Slavs Christian: "We utterly forbid that for any reason whatsoever a truce should be made with these peoples, either for the sake of money or for the sake of tribute, until such a time as, by God's help, they shall be either converted or wiped out."[183] Bernard insisted that the crusading army of the North should have the same privileges as that heading for the East. In this way the very concept of crusade was expanded and combined with a continuing effort of christianisation on the borders of Carolingian Europe.

In April Bernard was back at Clairvaux, where Eugenius III had come to give his blessing to the crusaders assembling at Dijon under Louis VII.[184] The French historian Pierre Aubé has listed Bernard's itinerary for 1147: Speyer, Worms, Koblenz, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liege, Cambrai, Reims, Clairvaux, Etampes, Frankfurt, Trier, Metz, Toul, Saint Denis, Paris.[185] It is an exhausting list but would be even more so if I added the places Bernard had visited the preceding year, especially during his preaching tour through the Rhineland.

In the midst of these preparations for a new crusade, a new matter of doctrinal orthodoxy emerged and demanded Bernard's attention. The bishop of Poitiers, Gilbert de la Porrée, had been accused the previous year at a synod of issuing writings that contained grave doctrinal error. Now a council was called for Paris on 22 April 1147, in the presence of Eugenius III himself. After some days of debate, it was decided to postpone the matter until a council at Reims on 22 March 1148.[186] As in the attack on Abelard, Bernard became the main opponent, but this time the accused had more powerful supporters than Abelard had been able to muster. In the account provided by Geoffrey of Auxerre, Bernard triumphed over a potential heretic and secured Geoffrey's agreement to recall what he had written about the

[183] SBO 8, Ep. 457, p. 433; James, Letter 394, p. 467.
[184] Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 281. Phillips (note 177 above), p. 119
[185] *Saint Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 2003), p. 690.
[186] Otto of Freising gives a full account of Gilbert's teaching and the attack on him. See *Die Taten Friedrichs* (note 175 above) 1.53–62, pp. 236–262, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 82–101.

Trinity: "He gave his assent and publicly recalled what he had formerly written and affirmed."[187]

Other accounts by the historian Otto of Freising (who was a Cistercian) and the court intellectual John of Salisbury are much less favourable to Bernard and indicate that this time he did not get his way. John wrote that Bernard had "only just failed" to get Gilbert condemned and that he had tried to exonerate both protagonists: "For my part I cannot believe that a man of such sanctity was not guided by the love of God, or that a bishop of such prudence and learning should commit to writing anything whose meaning was not clear to him."[188] John did his best to be charitable. He was writing more than a decade after the events and after the deaths of Bernard and Gilbert. But he conceded that the bishops at the council may have acted out of "desire to propitiate the abbot, whose influence was then at its height and whose counsel was most weighty in the affairs of church and state alike."[189]

Otto of Freising also tried to be charitable and avoided choosing sides: "Whether the aforesaid abbot of Clairvaux in consequence of the frailty of human weakness, being a mere man, was deceived in this matter, or the bishop, being a very learned gentleman, escaped the condemnation of the Church by shrewdly concealing his view, it is not our task to discuss or to decide."[190] The failure to obtain a condemnation of Gilbert, however, indicates that Bernard was losing his grip. For almost two decades he had been the central figure in the affairs of the Church in western Europe. He could not continue playing this role.

One almost forgets that Bernard continued to be the abbot of a monastery in the Cistercian Order. In 1147, the very year of crusade, the filiation of Savigny joined the Cistercians.[191] This step meant the absorption of 30 monasteries that had different customs and practices. Not all their abbots wanted to be part of the success of Cîteaux,

---

[187] PL 185:312, VP 3.15: "Consentiens et publice refutans quae prius scripserat et affirmaverat…"

[188] *Historia pontificalis* (note 175 above), p. 16: "Set mihi persuaderi non potest quod homo tante sanctitatis non habuerit zelum Dei, vel quod episcopus tante gravitatis et litterature in scriptis suis redegerit quippiam, cuius ei licet plurimos lateat, ratio non constaret."

[189] Ibid.: "…an ut sic promerentur abbatem, cuius tunc summa erat auctoritas, cuius consilio tam sacerdocium quam regnum pre ceteris agebatur."

[190] *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa* (note 186 above), 1.61, p. 101.

[191] Christopher Holdsworth, "The Affiliation of Savigny," in *Truth as Gift: Studies in Medieval Cistercian History in Honor of John R. Sommerfeldt*, ed. Marsha L. Dutton et alii (Kalamazoo, 2004), pp. 43–88.

but Bernard was willing to invest in this transition, for the General Chapter appointed the abbot of Clairvaux as visitor of Savigny. Here as in so much else, his approval was sought after. Certainly the "sibyl of the Rhine," Hildegard of Bingen, felt the need to obtain Bernard's blessing on her revelations. She wrote to him, probably in 1146, and received the next year a cautious reply, "How could I presume to teach or advise you who are favoured with hidden knowledge…"[192] Bernard was keeping his distance, or as Bruno Scott James wrote in his introduction to the letter, "the abbot of Clairvaux seems to word himself with a certain circumspection."[193]

After the Council of Reims in March of 1148, Pope Eugenius III joined Bernard at Clairvaux (24–26 April), and Bernard may then have accompanied him to Lausanne, from where the pope returned to Rome.[194] In mid-October the archbishop of Armagh, Malachy, came to Clairvaux and spent the last weeks of his life with Bernard, before his death on 2 November. Bernard valued the man as a friend and considered him to be a saint. He wrote Malachy's *vita*, the one work of hagiography we have from Bernard, a portrait of the archbishop as a church reformer and of course as a monastic founder.[195] The same year Humbert, former abbot of Igny, died, and Bernard wrote a sermon to eulogize him.[196]

---

[192] SBO 8, Ep. 366, p. 324; James, Letter 390, p. 460. There are two versions of the letter, a brief one and a longer one, which appeared in 1180–90. James translated the longer one.

[193] James, *Letters*, p. 460.

[194] PL 185:297, VP 2.50. Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux* (note 19 above), p. 318, points out that it is difficult to establish whether Bernard accompanied the pope to Lausanne. Here as in so much else it is a problem to get behind the layers of tradition about Bernard to the primary sources.

[195] SBO 4, pp. 307–378, trans. Robert T. Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman* (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1978). McGuire, "Intimacy or Confraternity: Bernard and Malachy Reconsidered," in *The Difficult Saint* (note 16 above), pp. 75–106.

[196] *In obitu domni Humberti*, SBO 5, pp. 440–447, a beautiful expression of Bernard's attachment to another monk. Bernard's sermons are contained in SBO 4–6, and the sermons for the church year from SBO 4, pp. 161–334, are translated by Irene Edmonds, Wendy Mary Beckett, and Conrad Greenia as *Sermons for Advent and the Christmas Season* (Kalamazoo, 2007). From SBO 5, pp. 121–216, Beverly Mayne Kienzle has translated *Sermons for the Summer Season* (Kalamazoo, 1991). An excellent overview of Bernard's sermons is contained in Gastaldelli, "*Optimus praedicator*: L'opera oratoria di San Bernardo," in *Studi su San Bernardo* (note 7 above), pp. 129–211.

In 1148 and 1149 reports must have come to Clairvaux about the failure of the Second Crusade.[197] Bernard's reaction can be seen in the work he had begun for Pope Eugenius, *De Consideratione*, in describing how the pope had to find a way to keep the business of his office from overwhelming his spiritual life.[198] The composition of this meditation on power and powerlessness stretched over the years from 1149–53, but the segment concerned with the Crusade belongs to 1149: "…the Lord, provoked by our sins, seems in some way to have judged the earth before the appointed time, justly, of course, but unmindful of his mercy."[199] Although Bernard had never been to Palestine, he imagined the sight of the Christian warriors "prostrate in the desert, slain by the sword or destroyed by hunger," so that their enemies were saying, "Where is their God?"[200]

Last Years 1150–53

Bernard did not abandon the dream of rescuing the Christian places in the Holy Land. In 1150 there was a meeting at Laon to discuss a new expedition, and on 7 May at Chartres Bernard was chosen to head the effort. He wrote afterwards to Eugenius III and made it clear that he was not the man to take on such a task: "Who am I to arrange armies in battle order, to lead forth armed men? I could think of nothing more remove from my calling, even supposing I had the necessary strength and skill."[201]

However much Bernard distanced himself from the new project, he still turned to another monastic figure, Peter the Venerable of Cluny, and asked him to come to a new assembly, to be held at Compiègne on 15 July, to provide support: "The Son of God turns to you as to one of the great rulers of his household. The nobleman who has gone off into a far country and entrusted to you much of his spiritual and material goods, now in the hour of need is forced to have recourse to

---

[197] Giles Constable, "The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries," *Traditio* 9 (1953), 213–279. Also Constable, "A Report of a Lost Sermon by St Bernard on the Failure of the Second Crusade," in *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History Presented to Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan* (Shannon, Ireland, 1971), pp. 49–54.

[198] SBO 3, 393–493, trans. John D. Anderson and Elisabeth T. Kennan, *Five Books on Consideration. Advice to a Pope* (Kalamazoo, 1976).

[199] SBO 3, II.1, p. 410, trans. *Advice to a Pope*, p. 47.

[200] Ibid., p. 411, trans. p. 47.

[201] SBO 8, Ep. 256.4, pp. 164–165; James, Letter 399, p. 472.

you for help and counsel."[202] Peter had apparently stayed away from the assembly at Chartres, and Bernard now turned to one of his oldest friends and rivals in the monastic world.

The world that Bernard had created, in which he sent forth moral declarations intended to change the course of history, was disappearing. The new crusade came to nothing. On 15 January 1151 Suger, abbot of Saint Denis and chancellor of France, passed away.[203] Bernard's friend of youth, Hugh of Vitry, who had been bishop of Auxerre, died in December of the same year, and a commission was set up to elect a successor. Bernard was made a member, and it is probably thanks to him that a Cistercian abbot again was elected to the post.[204] He still dominated episcopal elections in France, but in Italy the mad world of urban revolt showed that Bernard no longer made a difference. Rome again pledged itself to Arnold of Brescia.

It would seem appropriate if the aged and ill Bernard settled down to a quiet last few years in Clairvaux. He did not. One of his secretaries, Nicolas of Montieramey, ran off with Bernard's seal.[205] Nicolas had been allowing himself freedom in composing letters in Bernard's name, a result of the fact that Bernard had become too dependent on his secretaries. More encouraging was the visit of the archbishop of Lund, Eskil, who came to Clairvaux and fell in love with the Cistercian Order. He arranged for its monks to refound a Benedictine house on the island of Zealand. Esrum became the mother house of a number of Cistercian monasteries scattered across Denmark and the Baltic. The first abbot of Esrum, William, visited Clairvaux and Bernard in 1151 before continuing to the pope to get a confirmation of his new abbey.[206] Bernard subsequently wrote to Eskil with all the warmth of his rhetoric of friendship: "I cannot repay you for your affection, but I have one, whose mercy endures for ever, who will repay for me. I speak of

---

[202] SBO 8, Ep. 521, pp. 483–484; James, Letter 400, p. 473.

[203] John F. Benton, "Suger's Life and Personality," in *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (London and Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 386–408.

[204] SBO 8, epp. 275–276, 280, 282, pp. 186–188; James, Letters 345–348, pp. 422–427. See Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), pp. 187–189.

[205] For Nicolas, see John Benton's entry "Nicolas de Clairvaux," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 11 (1981), 255–259.

[206] McGuire, "Bernard and Eskil. Friendship and Confraternity," in *The Difficult Saint* (note 16 above), pp. 107–132, esp. pp. 112–114.

the Lord in whom and for whom you love me with such devotion and bind me to you with such affection."[207]

Geoffrey of Auxerre describes in detail how Bernard, "bedridden indeed but manful still," dragged himself to Metz to intervene in a conflict between the bishop and the people.[208] According the Geoffrey, God lessened for some days the pain Bernard felt so that he in the spring of 1153 could make the journey. His presence occasioned a number of healings: Bernard the miracle worker was still present in force. But his own life was ebbing away. On 8 July 1153 his friend Pope Eugenius III died.[209] Geoffrey included in his account a letter to Ernald of Bonneval in which Bernard described his own illness.[210] Adriaan Bredero has argued that this letter was concocted by Geoffrey after Bernard's death, but this conclusion has been challenged.[211] As with so much else in Bernard's life and writings, there is controversy.

It is certain that shortly after Bernard died on 20 August 1153, Geoffrey wrote to Archbishop Eskil to give him and the rest of the Christian world the news of his master's passing. This letter is not included in the *Vita Prima*, but with its language evocative of Bernard's own affective prose, it demonstrates how he left behind a spiritual and intellectual heritage that reshaped Christian thought and feeling: "Siquidem Bernardus amicus vester dormit; sed non totus dormit; vigilat vigilat cor illius" [Indeed Bernard your friend sleeps; but not all of him sleeps; his heart is awake and keeps watch].[212] Here is the powerful and evocative language of the Song of Songs (5.2), so important in Bernard's life: "ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat" [I sleep, and my heart keeps watch].

According to a later source, the *Exordium magnum Cisterciense*, the abbot of Cîteaux when he arrived at Clairvaux for Bernard's funeral was worried by the crush of lay pilgrims who had come to the abbey in order to be close to the saint's body and obtain healings. The abbot

---

[207] SBO 8, Ep. 390, pp. 358–359; James, Letter 424, pp. 493–494.

[208] PL 185:352, VP 3.3, Cawley, p. 102.

[209] Williams, *Saint Bernard* (note 113 above), p. 359.

[210] SBO 8, Ep. 310, p. 230; James, Letter 469, p. 521. PL 185:356–57, VP 3.10.

[211] Bredero, *Etudes sur la "Vita Prima"* (note 3 above), pp. 109–112. Richard Upsher Smith, "Arnold of Bonneval, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bernard's Epistle 310," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 49 (1993), 273–318. I am grateful to Professor Smith for sending me a copy of this article.

[212] *Diplomatarium Danicum* I Række, 2. Bind, red. Lauritz Weibull and Niels Skyum-Nielsen (Copenhagen, 1963), nr. 114, p. 206.

commanded Bernard beyond the grave to cease from such miracles. Otherwise the contemplative life of the monastery would have been impossible. Bernard obliged: for the first time in his existence since his youth he is described as obliging his father abbot.[213]

Bernard remains a mystery, a man who combined great talent and great obsessions. He can only be described in his own words: "I have kept the habit of a monk but I have long ago abandoned the life. I do not wish to tell you what I dare say you have heard from others: what I am doing, what are my purposes, through what dangers I pass in the world or rather down what precipices I am hurled."[214]

[213] *Exordium magnum*, ed. Griesser (note 58 above), dist. 2a, cap. 20, 116–117.

[214] SBO 8, Ep. 250.4, p. 147: "Nam monachi iamdudum exui conversationem, non habitum. Nolo scribere de me quod vos per alios audisse existimo, quid actitem, quid studeam, per quae discrimina verser in mundo, immo per quae iacter praecipitia." James, Letter 326.4, p. 402.

READING SAINT BERNARD: THE MAN, THE MEDIUM, THE MESSAGE

Michael Casey, ocso

Speaking about Bernard to monastic audiences these past 40 years, I have become aware that not all potential readers find approaching the abbot of Clairvaux an easy task. Some are not attracted to the author, some are unconsciously dissuaded by someone else's excessive enthusiasm, others find difficulty in the unfamiliarity of his language and style. Quite a few people find the cultural barrier impermeable. Many are unsure of what they should be looking for, or what part of their brain they should be engaging when they approach the text. Bernard has been declared a Doctor of the Church on account of his teaching. This makes no sense unless there are those who approach his writing with a willingness to be taught.

The first step in coming to a positive appreciation of Bernard's writing is to admit that a considerable gulf exists between the author and modern readers. It is naive to think that a medieval writer so utterly in tune with the spirit of the times can be fully understood at a first reading. Add to this the fact that Bernard's was a rich and complex personality and one whose elegant writing style is almost impossible to translate in its integrity, and the result is very challenging indeed. Initially, it is probably unwise to jump in at the deep end: one is more likely to drown than to be able to deal effectively with the volume of content to be found in many of Bernard's writings.[1]

It is not as though there are few studies to guide us in approaching Bernard's writing. Quite the contrary. The field of Bernadine studies has expanded greatly over the past 60 years, and almost every aspect of his personality, career, and thought have been pored over by scholars

[1] Perhaps this is why Brian Patrick McGuire entitled his study of Saint Bernard *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and His Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 1991). For an excellent general introduction to Bernard's writings there is none better than that published in 1984 by Jean Leclercq in the Italian edition of Bernard's *Opera Omnia*. This has been translated by Elias Dietz in *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 40 (2005), 3–25, 243–251, 365–393 [abbreviated henceforth as *CSQ*].

from various disciplines.[2] Notwithstanding this considerable body of scholarship, no recent biography of Bernard has appeared that synthesises the work done and offers a portrait of Bernard's life that is generally regarded as authoritative.[3] It is easier to isolate one aspect of Bernard's life or thought and to concentrate on this than to generate a coherent picture of his history as a whole.

There is another factor beyond the complexity of Bernard's character and career. At the risk of seeming elitist, it must be said that it seems that those who most readily tune in to the wave-length on which Bernard broadcast are those who stand in the same tradition as he, and who share his zeal for its characteristic beliefs and values.[4] Bernard is almost always a proponent for his own very particular world-view; it is something he takes for granted to such an extent that it filters whatever he writes on any subject. Those who are inside the filter, as it were, instinctively recognise the real import of what he is writing and feel more comfortable with it. It is not an exaggeration to say that modern monks and nuns have privileged access to Bernard's heart and mind: they are familiar with the language of monastic living; they are formed by the same daily contact with the Bible and the Liturgy; they pursue a lifestyle that, for all its adaptations, is in direct continuity with the form of life for which Bernard was so ardent an advocate; and they are, by and large, committed to the same monastic and contemplative ideals that 12th-century Cistercians espoused.

As with any other topic, it is helpful to approach Bernard with minds and hearts somewhat free of prejudice. Recent work has added nuance

---

[2] Twenty years ago I wrote a short article highlighting some aspects of the ever-growing field of Bernardine studies. "Bernard of Clairvaux: Forty Years of Scholarship," in John Stanley Martin, ed., *St Bernard of Clairvaux: The Man* (Department of Germanic Studies, University of Melbourne, 1991), pp. 31–45.

[3] The supremacy of the two-volume work of Elphège Vacandard remains virtually unchallenged: *Vie de saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols (Paris, 1895; 4th ed. 1927). A great deal of relevant information was compiled in the 756-page volume produced by the Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux: *Bernard de Clairvaux* (Paris, 1953). A brief chronological overview can be found in Laura Dal Prà, *Cronologia della vita di S. Bernardo di Clairvaux* (Casamari, 1990). See also the article by Brian P. McGuire in this volume.

[4] Louis B. Pascoe asserted that the logical conclusion from Bernard's treatment of the *imago Dei* theme is that the life that most completely restores the lost likeness to God is that of the Cistercian monastery. *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: The Doctrine of the* Imago *and its relationship to Cistercian Monasticism* (unpublished MA thesis, Fordham University, 1960).

to the understanding of Bernard's dealings with Peter Abelard,[5] has clarified his role in the second Crusade and his attitude to violence and war,[6] and has given context to his ironic diatribes against Cluniac art.[7] At the same time, his admirers have also yielded ground, admitting character defects, misjudgements, and wrong actions.[8]

Bernard's reputation has not always been helped by myth-makers and iconographers. The popular images of the *lactactio* and the *amplexus* of Bernard by the crucified Christ (regrettably appearing on the cover of my own book on Bernard) do not recommend themselves to contemporary sensibilities.[9] Moreover, Bernard is sometimes regarded as primarily a proponent of Marian theology, simply because the relatively few places in which he speaks about Mary are beautiful devotional texts; but they are integrated within a traditional theology that is biblical and sober.[10] Furthermore it is curious that high regard for Bernard is often due to *opera spuria* published under his name rather than to his authentic works. Despite the deliberate efforts to exclude *spuria*, about one-third of the pages of the first printed edition are devoted to works now regarded as non-genuine.[11] The same oddity is observable in English translations.[12]

---

[5] See, for example, "Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard" by Constant J. Mews in this volume.

[6] There are many ongoing works on the Crusades, not all equally valuable For more specific detail and bibliography see Michael Gervers, ed., *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (New York, 1992). See also George Piero Ferzoco, *Bernard of Clairvaux and Early Christian Thought Regarding the Salvific Role of Violence in Twelfth-Century Christian Society* (unpublished MA thesis, Trent University, 1985).

[7] See, for example, Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia, 1990).

[8] This process was intensified with the collection of articles published in 1976 by Jean Leclercq and translated as *A Second Look at Saint Bernard* (Kalamazoo, 1990).

[9] See Brian P. McGuire, "Bernard and Mary's Milk: A Northern Contribution," in *The Difficult Saint*, pp. 189–225; "Bernard and the Embrace of Christ: Renewal in Late Medieval Monastic Life and Devotion," in *The Difficult Saint*, pp. 241–249; Sheryl Frances Chen, "Bernard's Prayer Before the Crucifix That Embraced Him: Cistercians and Devotions to the Wounds of Christ," *CSQ* 29.1 (1994), 23–54; Franz Posset, "The Crucified Embraces Saint Bernard: The Beginnings of the *Amplexus Domini*," *CSQ* 33.3 (1998), 289–314.

[10] A few years ago the present author had occasion to complain to the editor of *The Tablet* about the inclusion in that periodical of the old furphy attributed to Bernard: *De Maria numquam satis*. The letter was not acknowledged nor printed.

[11] See *Divi Bernardi, religiosissimi Ecclesiae doctoris, ac primi Clareuallensis coenobij Abbatis, Opera, quae quidem colligi undequaque in hunc usque diem potuere, omnia* (Basel, 1552).

[12] Speaking of English translations, David N. Bell writes: "We must note that the works which were produced during this period (1496–1650) continued to reflect the

Almost anything that we can learn about the 12th century and about the agenda of reformed monasticism will serve as useful background to reading Bernard, but in this essay I would like to traverse three areas that are important for developing an appreciation of Bernard's writings: his personality, his literary style, and the main themes around which his various works revolve. There is much more that can be said, but these must suffice for the moment. We will be well on the way to appreciating Bernard's if we understand who wrote, how he wrote, and what he wrote.

The Man

We are fortunate indeed to possess several medieval hagiographies the describe the events of Bernard's life. It is important to remember, however, that these are not historical biographies in the way that most modern readers would expect. While they undoubtedly contain factual information, it is often described in a manner or set in a context that can mislead the unwary researcher.[13] Likewise it demands a broad knowledge of the relevant issues to gauge the meaning of Bernard's activities outside the monastery. Spirituality, reformed monasticism, the pursuit of contemplation, and the art of writing well were closer to Bernard's heart than any of his more or less felicitous interventions in public affairs. Any account of who Bernard was needs to be weighted in their favour.

Allow me to offer some windows into Bernard's personality that may supplement the well-known events of his life as a public personage. It is by a deeper understanding of the person that we will better

---

medieval popularity of texts attributed to Bernard rather than texts actually written by him, and of the nearly 60 editions published between 1496 and 1650, all but three are of pseudonymous works… This pseudonymous tradition, in fact, was to continue until the early nineteenth century…" See "'In Their Mother Tongue': A Brief History of the English Translation of Works by and Attributed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: 1496–1970," in E. Rozanne Elder, ed., *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Studies in Honor of Jean Leclercq* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 293–294.

[13] See M. Casey, "Towards a Methodology for the *VP*: Translating the First Life into Biography," in John R. Sommerfeldt, ed., *Bernardus Magister: Papers Presented at the Nonacentenary Celebration of the Birth of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Kalamazoo, Michigan* (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 55–70.

understand why he wrote as he did and the themes about which he chose to express himself.[14]

Humour

If we wish to distinguish between Bernard's public persona and his domestic everyday self, it is useful to examine some of his less formal writings—the familiar letters, the *Sententiae*, and to a lesser extent the *sermones de diversis* and the parables. Bernard often used his linguistic virtuosity to cushion the serious import of his letters and to make them lighter and more friendly.[15] A prime example of this is a short note of recommendation he penned to Bishop Baldwin of Noyon. The original was probably an autograph, since he notes that Geoffrey of Auxerre, his secretary, is elsewhere.

> To Dom Baldwin, bishop of Noyon.
> Brother Bernard, called abbot of Clairvaux.
> Better than he deserves!
> I am sending to you this boy, who carries the present letter, to eat your bread. In this way I can make a test of your miserliness—whether you do this with sadness. Do not mourn; do not weep (2 Esdras 8:9). He has a small belly and will be content with a few things. I will be grateful to you, however, if he comes back wiser rather than fatter. Let my way of speaking serve as a seal, since it is not to hand, nor is your friend Geoffrey.[16]

It is, undoubtedly, a cheeky letter, written by an older Bernard sometime after 1148, when Baldwin became bishop. Bernard seems to take for granted that his silly way of speaking (*maneries locutionis*) will be sufficient to authenticate the document. He was not afraid to be seen as a jester.[17]

---

[14] M. Casey, "Bernard of Clairvaux: The Man behind the Image," *Pacifica* 3.3 (1990), 269–287. And slightly revised, "Bernard of Clairvaux: The Face Behind the Persona," *CSQ* 27.2 (1992), 133–151.

[15] Jean Leclercq has noted the frequency of word-plays in Bernard's epistolary corpus. See "Lettres de Bernard; Histoire ou littérature?" in *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits 4* (Rome, 1987), pp. 202–205. More generally, see, Dorette Sabersky-Bascho, *Studien zur Paronomasie bei Bernhard von Clairvaux* (Freiburg, 1979)

[16] Ep. 402; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 8, p. 382. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone.

[17] Jean Leclercq, "Le thème de la jonglerie chez saint Bernard et ses contemporains," and "'Joculator et saltator.' S. Bernard et l'image du jongleur dans les manuscrits," in *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits 5* (Rome, 1992), pp. 347–362 and 363–390.

Bernard often used hyperbole to soften a stern message. By painting an abuse in such exaggerated form, he made it possible for readers or listeners to be challenged without being threatened. This is particularly true of the ironic passages in the *Apologia*. No medieval reader would believe that the descriptions of gigantic meals supposedly served to Black Monks or the pontifical splendour of their abbots were meant to be true-to-life pictures. They were making a point about values not creating an historical record. "In the various monasteries where this tract was found, it is probably true to say that the monks were grateful to St Bernard for making his spirituality so entertaining."[18] These outrageous passages were written with a smile, and they should be read with a smile.

To believe too easily the lifelong seriousness projected on Bernard by William of Saint Thierry is to be unaware of the light-heartedness that characterised one who claimed that his principal education came from spending time walking in the woods.[19] Bernard was comfortable in his own skin, unlike his first biographer, and was not afraid to laugh at himself.

Self-Deprecation

Bernard's admirers are sometimes embarrassed by his involvement in many kinds of business outside the monastery. It seems likely that asking a non-Cistercian to compose the second book of the *Vita prima* was motivated by the sensitivity surrounding the issue of Bernard's external activities. Bernard was not unaware of the polarisation of opinion in his regard.

> It is a great danger to hear something about oneself that is higher than what one knows within oneself. Who will grant me that I may be appropriately humbled among human beings concerning what is true in the same measure that I may be inappropriately lifted up by what is false?[20]

---

[18] Jean Leclercq, "Introduction [to the *Apologia*]," in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Treatises I* (Spencer, 1970), p. 26.

[19] *Vita Prima* 1.4.23 [henceforth abbreviated as VP]; J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina* (PL), 22 vols (Paris, 1844–64), 185:240d. William points out that this was said playfully among friends: "ioco…inter amicos dicere solet."

[20] Ep. 87.12; SBO 7, p. 231, lines 4–6. Bernard develops this point in an early letter written to Rainald, abbot of Foigny: Ep. 72.3, SBO 7, p. 177.

Bernard is aware that some people think badly of him and considers that there are grounds for this, just as the high opinion in which others hold him may be groundless. To support his case he quotes, in the previous paragraph, 2 Cor. 12:16: "I will desist, lest anyone think of me more highly that what he sees in me or from what he hears from me."

He recognises the ambiguity of his position as a much-travelled monk, busy about many matters.

> It is time that I cease being forgetful of myself. My monstrous life cries out, and my bitter conscience. I am like a chimera of my age, neither a cleric nor a layman, for I have for some time thrown off the monk's way of life, but not the habit.[21]

Here are some other colourful quotations that indicate both his awareness that his life is unconventional and his own discomfort at its inherent contradiction.

> For the rest unhappy man that I am, I am poor and naked, a man born for toil, like a little bird that has not yet grown feathers, nearly all the time out of its dear nest, at the mercy of wind and storm. I am upset and wobbly like a drunk and my whole conscience is eaten up.[22]

> I know very well that I have presumed to do more than I should have done without paying sufficient heed to myself.[23]

> I am weary and fainthearted… no better than an ant harnessed to a wagon.[24]

Commentators on Bernard's life often presume that the extraordinary range of his external activities was a matter of choice. This is not the whole truth, although he was probably somewhat complicit in being called forth from the enclosure. What is sometimes forgotten is the price he paid, not only in terms of the depletion of his physical well-being but also from the effects of compromising his own primary vocation and his spiritual aspirations. And those closest to him were fully conscious of his liabilities and limitations.

---

[21] Ep. 250.4; SBO 8, p. 147, lines 1–3. On this matter see John R. Sommerfeldt, *Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Spirituality of Relationship* (New York, 2004), pp. 114–123.

[22] Ep. 12; SBO 7, p. 62, lines 1–4; written to Guigo the Carthusian in 1133.

[23] Ep. 218.3; SBO 8, 79, lines 21–22; written to Pope Innocent in 1143.

[24] Ep. 280.1; SBO 8, p. 192, 7, lines 19–20; written to Pope Eugene in 1152.

Awareness of Limits

Bernard was multi-talented, but he could not do everything. In particular it seems that he was inept in practical tasks, perhaps too much absorbed in his own inner world to pay sufficient attention to details.[25] Just as his family sequestered him from their military pursuits, so they attempted to shield him from the demands of manual labour at the New Monastery. "At the time of harvest while the brothers were occupied in reaping with fervour and the joy of the Holy Spirit, he as one impotent and ignorant of such labour, was ordered to sit by himself and rest."[26]

As a young abbot he quickly found himself out of step with the more practical men of his community. Lack of material things scarcely moved Bernard, who was more concerned with the salvation of souls.[27] When the increasing numbers necessitated certain changes in the running of the house, his brother Gerard, who was cellarer, complained about the situation. Bernard's responded first with soft words. When these proved unavailing, he resorted to prayer.[28] Such a management style was not acceptable to those charged with the practical care of the community. They decided to remove temporal administration from his purview and to look after it themselves.

> It was because of this that the prudent men, understanding that the hand of the Lord was with [Bernard], took care not to weigh down with solicitude for external things, a tender mind so recently departed from the delights of paradise. Instead, as far as possible, they divided these affairs among themselves, consulting him only about their inner consciences, and on matters concerning their souls.[29]

Bernard began to toy with the idea of withdrawing completely from all outward affairs but a dream prevented this.[30] Meanwhile, matters came to a head in the community when the increasing number of new entrants demanded that a new monastery be built on a new site. The prior and others realised that they would first have to overcome Bernard's resistance and went about planning their tactics.

---

[25] See M. Casey, "Bernard the Observer," in E. Rozanne Elder, ed., *Goad and Nail: Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, X* (Kalamazoo, 1985), pp. 1–20.

[26] VP 1.4.24; PL 185:240d. William continues that after prayer Bernard obtained the grace to be among the most skilful of harvesters *ex solo Dei dono*.

[27] VP 1.5.26; PL 185:242a.

[28] VP 1.6.27; 242cd. The amazing coincidence that followed has often been replicated in the anecdotal history of monastic foundations.

[29] VP 1.6.27; 242d–243a.

[30] VP 1.6.29; 244ab.

Geoffrey, therefore, and a number of other such foresighted, men, all solicitous for the common welfare, pointed out to the Man of God certain things demanded by the needs of the house. But to do so they first had to oblige him to come down to their level, for normally his *conversatio* was up in heaven.

> Thus they conveyed to Bernard that the place where they had settled was narrow, ill-adapted, and lacking in room for such a multitude, with daily droves of new arrivals so swelling the numbers that they could not be received within the existing buildings. The oratory itself scarcely sufficed for even the professed monks. They went on to tell how lower down they had examined a flat area and found it well adapted, with the added advantages of the river flowing just beyond and ample room for all the needs of the monastery: meadows, granges, shrubberies, and vineyards. True, it lacked the forest as an enclosure, but that could easily be supplied by walls built from the enormous supply of stones available on the spot.
>
> Initially the Man of God did not consent to the plan. He said: "You see for yourselves what expenditure and sweat it took to complete the existing buildings, done in stone. Remember the huge cost of bringing the aqueducts to each of the workshops! If we demolish all this, worldly folk can rightly think ill of us for our levity and changeability and blame us for letting our excessive wealth drive us to insanity, as if, indeed, we had such wealth! Moreover, given your certainty that we lack the funds, I can only repeat to you the Gospel saying that anyone about to build a tower necessarily has to reckon up the costs of the task ahead; otherwise, once he has begun and failed, it will be claimed, 'Here is someone who senselessly began to build and was unable to finish.'"
>
> To this the brethren replied: "Had it been that, after we finished all the needed building, God had ceased sending more and more persons to dwell in our monastery, then indeed, such a statement could stand and we could reasonably be told to withdraw from further construction. But as it is, God continues daily to multiply his flock, and either we have to repulse those he sends us or else provide a lodging to receive them. Can we doubt that he who endows us with dwellers will equip us with dwellings? Far be it from us to incur shame and reproach by being distrustful over money."
>
> On hearing this, the abbot was delighted at their faith and charity, and he eventually agreed to their plan, though only after first pouring out many a prayer to God about it and being shown a number of revelations. And once the matter had become common knowledge among the brethren at large, these too rejoiced.[31]

[31] VP 2.5.29–30; PL 185:284–85. Translation by Martinus Cawley, *Bernard of Clairvaux. Early Biographies* (Lafayette, Oregon, 2000).

This narrative reveals many genuine character traits. Bernard manifests a rare degree of humility in allowing himself to be dispossessed of his authority over everyday affairs. We all know that often it is those who are the least competent in exercising authority who cling to it most tenaciously. The members of his community are not so much in awe of him that they refrain from criticising him to his face and forcing him to change his ways—be it ever so sweetly. Knowing their man and his enthusiasm for monastic recruitment, they point out to him that the massive influx of candidates was to be considered a providential sign, not to be ignored. Bernard realises that he has been outmanoeuvred and, with good humour, allows his firm principles of poverty to give way before common sense and necessity. This trait of changing an erroneous position after representations from his community will be further discussed in the next section.

Admission of Mistakes

There is no doubt that Bernard's nature was hot-tempered and impetuous and that he did not always resist its impulses. Writing to Guy—abbot of Clairvaux's daughter-house, Troisfontaines, who later was forced to give up the abbacy of Cîteaux for reasons not specified—Bernard advises him not to be ashamed to reverse a previous decision, perhaps made in haste. And so Bernard shares his own experience. In a fit of pique he had excommunicated his blood-brother Bartholomew. When he had cooled down he submitted the matter to the community's judgement and, in his absence, they found that Bernard was in the wrong. Bernard accepted this decision.

> I will tell you, for an example, of a similar thing that I remember happening to myself. One day moved by anger I commanded, with threatening face and voice, my brother Bartholomew, who was still alive, who had upset me to leave the monastery. He immediately went out and betook himself to one of our granges and remained there. When I found out I wanted to recall him, but he replied that he would not come back unless he was first reinstated in his old position, and not put in the last place as if he had been a fugitive, for he had been expelled from the monastery, without consideration and without his case being heard. He was saying that he ought not to be subject to the judgement of the Rule in returning since it had not been observed in his expulsion. As I could not trust my own judgement in the matter owing to my natural feelings about it, I submitted it to the judgement of all the brothers. And they, when I was absent, ruled that the brother should not be subjected to the discipline of

> the Rule on being received back, as his expulsion had not been according to the Rule.[32]

There are a number of interesting points to be made about this passage. Jean Mabillon rejected this text as "absolutely foreign to the genius of Bernard, to his way of life and to what we know about him from other sources."[33] Far from being scandalised by this story, most modern readers are edified by Bernard's willingness to admit error and to submit to the judgement of the whole community.

Collaboration

Bernard is often regarded as a man of solitary brilliance, charging forward and expecting others to follow. Although we cannot be certain of all the details concerning the exact working of the collectivity that came to be known as the Cistercian Order, it is clear that its first decades were strongly collegial. This despite the fact that Abbot Stephen of Cîteaux, the proto-abbots, and fathers-immediate often exercised a moral authority that went far beyond what was written down. Bernard was trusted enough to be often mandated to become involved in the affairs of the Order, to deal with urgent and delicate issues that had arisen unexpectedly.

Not many have reflected on the meaning of Bernard's involvement with the reform of the Cistercian chant.[34] This was begun soon after the death of Abbot Stephen in 1135 and was brought to a conclusion only at the General Chapter of 1147. This period is, of course, that of Bernard's most intense external activity. Bernard's role was probably organisational; his was the daunting task of maintaining peace among the musicians "better instructed and more skilful in the theory and practice of chant" and bringing the project to completion. His own attempt at the composition of a liturgical office, done during this time in response to a request from the canons of St Victor, seem like arid

---

[32] Ep. 70.2; SBO 7, p. 173, lines 9–20. Translated by Bruno Scott James (London, 1953), pp. 102–103, modified somewhat.

[33] Quoted by Jean Leclercq in "Études sur saint Bernard et le texte de ses écrits," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 9 (1953), 90 [abbreviated henceforth as *AC*].

[34] Chrysogonus Waddell is, of course, the exception. See also Ignace Bossuyt, "Bernardus van Clairvaux en de hervorming van de liturgische zang," in M. Sabbe, M. Lamberigts, and F. Gistelinck, eds, *Bernardus en de Cisterciënzerfamilie in België* (Leuven, 1990), pp. 115–125.

exercises in cleverness rather than outstanding compositions.[35] But it is clear from a letter to Guy of Montiéramey that, as always, Bernard had strong principles about the matter, even though he left the work of implementing them to others.[36] Furthermore the oral/aural quality of his prose seems to indicate that Bernard had a good ear for rhythm and flow.

His prologue to the revised Antiphonary reveals some aspects of his personality that are not always factored into presentations of his character: his ability to collaborate with others more talented than himself, his efficiency in bringing closure to a project, the trust and prestige he enjoyed within the Cistercian Order, and his own aesthetic sense.

> BERNARD, humble abbot of Clairvaux,
>
> To all who are to transcribe this Antiphonary, or sing from it.
>
> There were a number of things for which our Fathers, that is to say, those who began the Cistercian Order, were zealous, and rightly so. Among these concerns, the chanting of the divine praises according to the most authentic version was the object of their most earnest, dedicated efforts. They accordingly sent persons to transcribe and bring back the Metz Antiphonary, since this Antiphonary, it was said, was "Gregorian." They found the reality far different from what they had heard. For, upon examination, the Antiphonary proved unsatisfactory: texts and melodies were found to be corrupt, quite badly structured, and deserving of contempt in almost every respect. But once they had begun, they put it into use and retained it up to our own day. The time finally came, however, when our brethren, i.e., the abbots of our Order, were no longer able to put up with it. Having agreed that the Antiphonary was to be revised and corrected, they put me in charge of the task. I, however, summoned those of these same brethren of ours, who proved to be better instructed and more skilful in the theory and practice of chant. We put together the new Antiphonary—presented in the following volume—from many different sources; and we believe that, textually and musically, it is beyond reproach. Anyone who sings from this Antiphonary will prove this (provided, of course, he knows something about chant). We therefore wish that, from now on, the Antiphonary as revised and contained in this volume, be adopted in our monasteries, both as regards texts and melodies; and, in virtue of the authority of the whole General Chapter, where this Antiphonary was accepted and confirmed by all the abbots, we prohibit any change whatsoever to be made by anyone, and in any way. Should the Reader wish to know in greater detail the reasons and principles behind the present revision, he

[35] SBO 3, pp. 501–508.
[36] Ep. 398; SBO 8, pp. 377–379.

> should read the following Preface, which the above-mentioned revisers of the old Antiphonary were at pains to prefix to the new version. A clear expose of the textual and musical faults of the earlier volume will make the necessity and usefulness of the revised, corrected Antiphonary appear in clearer light.[37]

Appreciation of Others

As a pastor, Bernard was obliged to keep reminding his monks of the virtues that they needed to practise if they were to remain faithful to their vocation. Often he seems to propose very high ideals, and the modern reader may wonder whether he realistically expected his monks to attain them. The picture that we receive from Herbert of Clairvaux's anecdotal work *De miraculis* is that Bernard had his feet firmly on the ground. Although he was irritated by the sloppiness of some monks, he was more often surprised by virtue than by vice.[38]

There are two particular instances of Bernard's ability to be delighted at the virtue of other flawed human beings. The first involves Humbert, the erstwhile abbot of Igny, an austere and crusty individual who embodied the hard line typical of Cîteaux at its origins but simultaneously endeared himself to the community with his integrity and kindness. The second instance involves Bernard's own brother Gerard, as unlike Bernard as possible. Bernard respected Gerard's different talents, made use of them, and greatly treasured the special care that his older brother had for him, even when Bernard was abbot and Gerard a mere monk.

Conrad of Eberbach devotes a chapter of the *Exordium Magnum* to Humbert and says that at his death Bernard was extremely upset, *vehementer turbatus*.[39] Humbert had been prior of Clairvaux and then founding abbot of Igny from 1128 to 1138. Then, unwilling to continue with the hassles of administration and in defiance of Bernard's prohibition, he resigned his office and returned to Clairvaux, determined to resume his life as a simple monk. Bernard's sermon on the death of Humbert, who had become again one of the pillars of the community, shows Bernard to be a man able to go beneath superficial

---

[37] *Prologue to the Cistercian Antiphonary*, in *Treatises I*, Cistercian Fathers, 1 (Spencer, 1970), pp. 161–162.

[38] See M. Casey, "Herbert of Clairvaux's *Book of Wonderful Happenings*," *CSQ* 25.1 (1990), 37–64.

[39] *Exordium magnum cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961), dist. III, cap. 4, pp. 154–156.

prickliness to discover a heart of gold.[40] Bernard's account is more true to life than Conrad's. Humbert was a man with absolutely no sense of humour (Humb. 3). He would never laugh even when everyone else did. He was, Bernard admits, obstinate (Humb. 4), reluctant to obey when it came to accepting any mitigations of the rule (Humb. 4), and uncompromising in his zeal for monastic observance (Humb. 3). But he was a man of integrity, accepted and loved by the community, and a very wise counsellor. Even his seriousness was not a burden to others (Humb. 3). "A pleasant friend, a prudent adviser and a strong helper" (Humb. 1).

> He was pure and full of discernment, as I know the better for often having confided in him. I am not the only one who knows this. All of you know it too. Who among you when tormented by many great temptations did not hear from his mouth both the root of the temptation and the means of curing it? He used to scour all the corners of his client's conscience so that it might well be believed what was said of him that he saw everything and missed nothing. (Humb. 4)

Even allowing for the exaggeration typical of a panegyric, Bernard asserts that Humbert was a man who lived more than 30 years without a quarrel and whose demeanour was loving and pleasant to all (Humb. 2). Remember, Bernard is talking to those who had lived with Humbert and knew him not only from above but also as equals or subordinates. Humbert, it seems, was charitable in his speech (Humb. 3) and always willing to sympathise (Humb. 7) and make excuses for others.

> How great was his charity. He was the soul of compassion and kindness (*se induit viscera pietatis*) so that he had an excuse for everyone. He would intercede for all without their knowing who had spoken up for them, he made no distinction of persons, but only of needs. (Humb. 5)

Humbert drew his energy from his following of Christ (Humb. 5), and even though he spoke little, his message was always of God's kindness (Humb. 6). This austere man who, since he returned from Igny, had not only lived in the community but had lived for the community (Humb. 7), was yet a great lover of the brothers. While presenting Humbert as a man of great and highly individual spirituality, Bernard traces his spiritual physiognomy entirely in terms of his participation in the life of the community. There is an aggressive resistance to

[40] On what follows, see M. Casey, "*In communi vita fratrum*. St Bernard's Teaching on Cenobitic Solitude," *AC* 46 (1990), 243–261.

anything that would separate him from his brothers. He found God and prayer in the cenobitic life, and he allowed no solitary pretensions to keep him from full participation in it.

In 1138 Bernard, accompanied by his brother Gerard, was in Viterbo dealing with the final phases of the Anacletan schism. Gerard fell mortally sick but was, according to the information in the *Exordium Magnum*, temporarily cured through the prayers of Bernard. Mission accomplished, the brothers arrived back at Clairvaux, were shortly thereafter Gerard died an edifying death in his own monastery.[41] Bernard honoured his departed brother in the way he knew best, by composing an elegant panegyric that immortalised one who spent most of his life in the background. Bernard's enemy Berengar feigned outrage that he should have interrupted his discourse with such an exhibition of personal grief.[42] He misses the point, of course. Like a memorial tablet fixed in a public place, this elegiac passage was to remain in full view to remind all who passed by of his brother's outstanding qualities. It is not an impromptu outpouring of uncontainable grief as it pretends and some have assumed; it is a controlled and mannered testimony of the hidden contribution Gerard made to Bernard's own more public activities. Gerard, the big brother, had been more than Bernard's minder; he had also been his aide-de camp, his sounding-board, and his emotional support. This is Bernard's public tribute to him, rekindling his personal grief and re-expressing it in literary terms, but no less sincere and heartfelt for that.[43]

Certain parts of this discourse are worth considering for the light they throw on Bernard's personality. He is not threatened by or envious of his brother's particular giftedness but recognises, honours, and makes use of it. He is not reluctant to share some of the glory given to him by speaking clearly about his reliance on Gerard's behind-the-scenes activity. In so doing Bernard reveals to us some of the limitations he experienced. In particular, Bernard's ineptitude in practical matters is spoken of as well-known: his forgetfulness, inattention to

---

[41] *Exordium magnum*, ed. Griesser (note 39 above), dist. III, cap. 3, pp. 153–154.

[42] *Liber apologeticus*; PL 178:1863d–1864a.

[43] See also M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 163–180. Dorette Sabersky, "'Affectus Confessus sum et non Negavi.' Reflections on the Expression of Affect in the 26th Sermon on the Song of Songs of Bernard of Clairvaux," in *The Joy of Learning* (note 12 above), pp. 187–216.

detail, impetuousness, and need for someone to safeguard the measure of solitude that he needed for his own creative and pastoral activities.

It seems criminal to cut sections out of this discourse, but it is useful for the light that certain passages throw on Bernard's own personality. It is impossible for Bernard to describe his relationship with Gerard without saying a great deal about himself, since Gerard is presented as the one who supplied the elements that were lacking to his brother.[44]

Bernard's ill-health is widely attested, though the cause of it is uncertain. It seems likely that he needed someone to ensure that he took proper care of himself, especially when travelling. Bernard was not always self-driven but needed a measure of encouragement. Sometimes he needed to be spurred on, at other times reined back.

> I was frail in body and he sustained me, faint of heart and he gave me courage, slothful and negligent and he spurred me on, forgetful and improvident and he gave me timely warning. (SC 26.4)

Far from being self-sufficient, Bernard relied on Gerard for advice and support when he encountered difficulties.

> In every emergency I look to Gerard for help, as I always did, and he is not there. Alas! then I can only sigh in I my misery, like a man deprived of all resources. To whom shall I turn for advice when perplexed? In whom shall I confide when fortune is against me? Who will carry my burdens? Who will save me when danger threatens? Were not Gerard's eyes an unfailing guide to my feet? Were not my worries, O Gerard, better known to your heart than to mine, their inroads more penetrating, their pressure more acute? (SC 26.6)

Bernard may not have known the principle of subsidiarity but he delegated much of his authority to Gerard and freely permitted his brother to act in his name. Through Gerard, Bernard seems to have been able to treat people better than if he dealt with them directly; Gerard had, perhaps, an innate courtesy that his more driven younger brother may not always have shown to the importunate. Bernard was able to trust his brother; he felt no need to micro-manage his affairs.

> How often did you not free me from worldly conversations by the adroitness of your gifted words, and return me to the silence that I loved? The Lord endowed him with a discernment that enabled him to speak with

---

[44] *Sermones in Cantica* [abbreviated henceforth as SC] 26.3, 6–7; SBO 1, pp. 171–176. I am using the translation of Kilian Walsh, in Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, vol. 2 (Kalamazoo, 1976), pp. 60–66.

> due propriety, and this prudence in his responses, accompanied by a certain graciousness given to him from above, made him acceptable both to his fellow monks and to people in the world, and anybody who spoke to Gerard had rarely need to see me. He made a point of meeting visitors to forestall and prevent them from inopportune intrusion on my solitude. When he did lack the competence to satisfy the needs of some, he brought them to me; the others he dealt with and dismissed. (SC 26.6)

Without Gerard, Bernard would have had little leisure for prayer or the preparation of his teaching. If it is true that Bernard was a strong introvert, then he would have needed solitude to build up the inner resources that made his social interaction so fruitful. He was grateful to Gerard, who understood his need and saw that it was met.

> So I may thank you, dear brother, for what fruits may result from my studies of the things of God. What progress I have made, what good I have done, I owe to you. Your involvement in the business of the house gave me the leisure and privacy for more prayerful absorption in divine contemplation, for more thorough preparation of doctrine for my sons. Why should I not rest secure in my cell when I knew that you were my spokesman with the people, my right-hand man, the light of my eyes, my heart and my tongue? (SC 26.6)

After praising Gerard's competence in all aspects of practical administration Bernard continues.

> I found him helpful above all others and in every situation, helpful on small occasions and great, in private and in public, in the world and in the cloister. It was only right that I should depend entirely on him, he was all in all to me. He left me little more than the name and honour of provider, he did the work. I was saluted as abbot, but he was the one who watched over all with solicitude. I could not but feel secure with a man who enabled me to enjoy the delights of divine love, to preach with greater facility, to pray without anxiety. I must repeat that through you, my dear brother, I enjoyed a peaceful mind and a welcome peace; my preaching was more effective, my prayer more fruitful, my study more regular, my love more fervent. (SC 26.7)

Bernard had many friends, and part of the reason for this was that he was an honest admirer of goodness in others. He was not so narcissistically absorbed that he was unable to perceive the giftedness of others in matters both temporal and spiritual.

Concern for Others

As an abbot in the spirit of Benedict's Rule, Bernard was obliged to have as his primary concern the well-being of the brothers entrusted to his care. Some commentators have wondered how well Bernard

fulfilled this obligation, given the size of his community, his many absences, the concessions made necessary by his poor health, and the many demands made on his time and attention by the needs of the Order and the Church.

Some response to this hesitation may be found in a panegyric preached by Geoffrey of Auxerre, the fourth abbot of Clairvaux, to his community on the tenth anniversary of Bernard's death, on 20 August 1163.[45] Even allowing for the possibility that an orator could, on such an occasion, be swept far away from reality by the exuberance of his eloquence, the presence of Bernard's own community would surely have acted as a check on any tendency to stray too far from the truth.

First of all he speaks of Bernard's gift of bringing healing to wounded souls and liberation to those who were enslaved. And when his words failed, he resorted to prayer.

> Bernard drove away by his prayer the various diseases of souls. Bitterness, harshness and violent outbursts gave way to the freedom bestowed by Christ and there followed a delightful rest after the long and heavy servitude to Pharaoh. What an amazing and admirable change took place. […] He made wild beasts into Christ's men. He was able to do anything by his combination of concern and zeal. […] If it happened that somebody was less moved to salvation by his exhortations, then Bernard brought pressure to bear on God by prayer. (10)

Bernard was a man of empathy; and knew how to adapt his approach to the disposition of each individual. When he spoke it was in solidarity with those whom he addressed so that, even when corrections were to be made, his voice sounded as the voice of inner conscience rather than of outward rebuke.

> He took as his own the passions of all and wept for them as if they belonged to him. Likewise he reckoned as his own the progress and toil of each. He knew how to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. In the same way the virtues as vices of all he transferred to his own account. Just as virtue excites others to virtue, so pity shown to those who lead pitiable life brings them to holiness. Bernard harvested in others more than they did themselves. The salvation of each was his highest priority. He persevered in this energetically, zealously and indefatigably, according to the conduct and nature of each person. With one he acted secretly, with another in public. To one he showed himself severe, to another gentle. With each different intervention his face

[45] *Sermo in anniversario obitus S. Bernardi* 10–11; PL 185:579–80. The translation is my own.

> would change; sometimes he would seem as one to be loved, at other times as one to be feared. These two emotions were aroused in all his monks: his love would inspire a [salutary] fear, and fear and discipline would lead to love. (10)

His perception of what was happening inside the monk led him to make adaptations in the everyday life and work of each. In an extraordinary statement Geoffrey says that he took a personal interest in how much sleep his monks were getting and in the state of the stomachs.

> It was extraordinary how much care he showed to those who were sad or oppressed by some thought. It was easy for him to perceive what was troubling anyone because he was very familiar with what went on inside each monk. He made provision for each with great kindness in case one should be weighed down with too much work or another corrupted by too much quiet. It was as though he took a personal interest in how much sleep they all got. Those who were strong in body he constantly cautioned against sloth. Those who were fervent in spirit he constrained to take more rest. It was as though by some divine instinct that he knew the strength of all, their aims in life and even their stomachs. He became the servant of all through Jesus Christ. (11)

Geoffrey speaks of Bernard's care for the sick. We know from Herbert that he visited those in the infirmary after Compline.[46] Geoffrey glides on to speak of his care for those, whether sick or not, whose lives had been made miserable by the actions of others.

> What is surprising is that one man could simultaneously accomplish all these functions, especially one who was himself subject to a variety of ailments. Though unequal in strength, he showed himself equal to the robust and the recently arrived in fasting and vigils. Though he was sicker, he visited the sick and provided refreshment for their souls and bodies and he always made sure that none of them lacked anything they needed. [He would say] "This one is cold. This one has a lot on his mind. This one is working too hard. The food is not right for this one. Here is one who has been hurt by another. One has to bear a heavy burden; not less a burden is borne by another who feels that he has been hurt. It is of great importance to bring grace to those who are offended. Even though the injury is slight or imaginary, he grieves as one who has suffered much." (11)

[46] *De miraculis* 1.13; PL 185:1291b.

Bernard was convinced that whoever died in the Cistercian habit would find rapid access to heaven.[47] His first priority was, therefore, to make sure that he did everything possible to ensure that his monks persevered. This might mean making adaptations in the lifestyle, consoling and encouraging them when the going was hard, and rebuking and correcting when anyone lost his way. "He tried to help all carry the yoke of Christ more easily."

> Bernard acted like this all the time; it was always a preoccupation with him. He tried to help all carry more easily the yoke of Christ and to turn away any suggestions that came from the devil. The dark cloud of guilt was swept away to summon back fair wealth of grace. He tried to instil the love of Christ and of the neighbour and to renew in the minds of all the joy he felt in his own heart and which continued to burn with desire for Christ as it did on the first day of his monastic life. (11)

The picture that Geoffrey draws is comparable to the very proactive notion of abbatial ministry that Bernard himself outlines in his letter of Rainald of Foigny.[48] To Rainald, Bernard repeats Benedict's reminder that the abbot's ministry is to those less strong than himself, so that there is no reason to complain that his monks are a burden to him. That is the way it should be. He is the one who is called to exercise active care for those in his charge. In this matter Bernard seems to have practised what he preached.

Personal Attraction

Bernard's positive impact on those whom he encountered is a commonplace observation among commentators on his life; sometimes it is greeted with scepticism or suspicion. Even before he entered the New Monastery, mothers hid their sons, wives their husbands, and friends their friends, lest they lose them to his persuasive charm.[49] For better or for worse, he continued to exercise this power of attraction throughout his life. We find a clear witness to this in the recollections of Isaac of Stella.

Isaac of Stella was born in England some ten years after Bernard. After a brilliant scholastic career at the school of Chartres, he became

---

[47] *De miraculis* 2.11, in PL 185:1323a; also *De miraculis* 1.31, in PL 185:1304b, as well as in PL 185:461d.

[48] Ep. 73; SBO 7, pp. 179–180.

[49] VP 1.14; PL 185:235c.

a Cistercian and, in 1147, was elected abbot of Étoile or Stella, a foundation of Pontigny. It was at this stage, probably, that he came into personal contact with Bernard, at least through the landmark General Chapters that took place at that period. Thirty years later Isaac, now living in the island monastery of Ré, set down his impressions of Bernard in a stylishly crafted discourse designed to bridge the gap between the Solemnity of the Assumption and Bernard's newly designated celebration.

Isaac, despite his intellectual sophistication and his wide experience of famous people was completely overwhelmed by Bernard's attractiveness. He admits that many people took exception to some of the causes espoused by the abbot of Clairvaux and disagreed with some of his actions, but their disapproval melted away the moment they met the man.

> We have seen a man that had something superhuman. His actions and rebukes have in his absence caused some whom he scorched to murmur against him. But, in his features there was a sort of divine majesty, inducing at once both peace and fear yet worthy of love and the respect of charity. Grace was poured out on his lips, and anointed his face to reproach those who reproached him so that they came to love, praise and proclaim all that he did… We are speaking of holy Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux. In his absence he seemed like the sun and the moon and a fearsome army, but when he was present he always flowed with delights so that though his love was demanding, his demands were lovable. In his speaking or in imposing discipline, he never let others become discouraged by pusillanimity or to burn with impatience or to become a victim to envy.[50]

There seems little doubt that Bernard was a spellbinder, but there was more to him than facile charm. Somehow those who met him came away strengthened and encouraged by the encounter. "He never allowed anyone to be discouraged by timidity, eaten up by impatience or wracked by envy." In a period that was wracked by many fears about the possibility of being saved, Bernard habitually preached confidence in God's mercy. It seems that his whole demeanour beamed the same message. For many he became a sacrament of God's presence.

Isaac singles out five virtues of Bernard which contributed to the salutary impact he had on people, in drawing them to cooperate with the inner workings of grace.

---

[50] Isaac of Stella, *Sermons* 52.15; Sources chrétiennes, 339 (Paris, 1987), p. 234.

1. Innocence: in that he seemed to be a man entirely lacking in malice, without ill-will or nastiness. We would probably say that he was someone who was at peace with himself and had no need to punish others for his own defects.
2. Munificence: a man who was generous in giving himself to others, doing what he could to help them, and showing himself concerned for their welfare.
3. Enthusiasm: in all his deeds he showed a great and good zeal for whatever belonged to the spiritual order; he was tireless in the works of love. His faith was proactive and bold—not lukewarm or half-asleep.
4. Influence: people were changed when they came into his orbit, not by brute force but by his evident holiness that drew forth from those he met a response of awe and reverence.
5. Love made him pleasant and lovable to those with whom he dealt; he was not afraid to be loved or to love.

Bernard had limitations and faults, like the rest of us. What the almost-unanimous testimony of his contemporaries reveals is that his liabilities were minimised by rare human qualities that won the loyalty and friendship of many. Those who met him were inspired to pursue the spiritual path more earnestly. He mirrored to them something of their own spiritual potential and communicated to them a firm hope and a healthy optimism in the possibility of living a holy life and coming closer to God. That is why hundreds of those whom he met followed him into monastic life and persevered in their labours until death. Bernard was, above all the apostle of confidence, in an age where this quality was much lacking. So tireless was he in proclaiming the effectiveness of God's grace that even after his death, monks were reporting dreams and apparitions in which Blessed Bernard appeared to them, encouraging them to persevere and rebuking them for their despair.

In this aspect, Bernard's life was a continuation of his teaching. Isaac insisted, as did others of his contemporaries such as Guerric of Igny and John of Salisbury, that the true personality of Bernard was best known by reading his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. In them he revealed his heart—in turn showing himself as humane, lovable, passionate, practical, and mystical. Bernard understood monastic life and understood monks; he was aware of how easy it is for those with high ideals to become discouraged by their apparent lack of progress. His response to this dilemma permeates all that he wrote and did.

The message of his life, exemplified in the way in which he presented himself to others, was this: put all your trust in the power of Christ's love, and do not overestimate your own capacity to resist it. The most important skill that a monk needs if he is to find happiness in his vocation is to accept peacefully the truth of his liabilities and not permit them to inhibit his capacity to love. The only way to accomplish this is to accept the greater truth that we are first loved by God and that the only way forward is to open our hearts to respond to love in every opportunity that presents itself; then to put all our trust in the mercy of God. That is what Bernard taught; that is how he lived.

The Medium

Many new readers find Bernard's particular style an obstacle to appreciation. By style I mean a characteristic mode of writing, determined as it is by the particular genius of the language he is using, his period, the literary form he chooses to encase his message, and his personality. Particularly those unaccustomed to reading texts from a different epoch or culture find great difficulty in extracting Bernard's "essential" message from what they term the "flowery language" in which it is expressed.

The first aspect of this difficulty is insoluble. Bernard wrote in 12th-century Latin. This was not the language of Cicero or even of Jerome, but a more fluid medium, still living but already coming strongly under the influence of the emergent Romance languages, especially French. More than that, Bernard wrote very well and was careful to submit his text to a host of minor revisions to ensure that the finished product said exactly what he wanted. This makes reading Bernard a delight, but translating him a torture. It is easy enough to convey the content of the text in comprehensible English, but it is impossible to include the word plays, logical leaps, and biblical undertones that make the original Latin sparkle. By the time his words have been re-organised to make sense, his words have become heavy and unnatural. Add to this the fact that earlier versions often bowdlerised the text and overlaid it with pious commonplaces, and the result alienates. There is much to be gleaned from reading even mediocre translations, but, it seems, the amazing impact of the original Latin cannot be reproduced in English. It seems to me that the possibility of reading Bernard in the original is sufficient motive for learning Latin.

The second obstacle is easier to understand. When medieval authors wrote, they formed their matter according to pre-existing templates or literary genres. From one point of view these genres are merely the containers of the author's thought, but, in reality, they are more than this. They give shape to the thought as it comes into expression. It could almost be said that the medium is the message. By keeping the rules of a particular genre, with its particular palette of rhetorical colours, an author is able to create in the mind of the reader an expectation of what is to come. This makes even the most circuitous logic easier to follow and increases the impact if, occasionally, the author decides to break the rules.

Jean Leclercq devoted a chapter to literary genres in *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, as an important contribution of medieval monasticism.[51] Elsewhere he writes: "It was unthinkable for ancient and medieval writers not to base their composition on fixed rules and models appropriate to their purpose. It is these that determine the literary genre."[52] If modern readers are disappointed or frustrated by the "style" of medieval texts, it is, at least partly, because they fail to appreciate that the vocabulary and tone of a text is largely determined by the choice of genre. Readers need to adapt their attitudes to suit the kind of text that they are approaching.

The Cistercian Sermo

The quintessential Cistercian genre is the *sermo*. Unfortunately this word is often translated into English as "sermon," conjuring up images of preachers in pulpits. No such sermons were preached in Cistercian churches. The talks or discourses or addresses that communicated abbatial teaching were delivered in the chapter room. The daily reflections on the Rule were mostly reserved to the choir monks and were often received in a state of drowsy inattention, but their cumulative effect over a lifetime was substantial.[53]

---

[51] *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1982), pp. 153–190.

[52] Introduction to the *Apologia*, p. 15.

[53] On the daily commentaries on the Rule, see *Ecclesiastica Officia* 70.27–29; Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet, *Les Ecclesiastica Officia cisterciens du XIIème siècle* (Reiningue, 1989), p. 204.

The abbot was obliged to give a chapter discourse on all major solemnities or "Feasts of Sermon," with the *conversi* huddled in the cloister outside the chapter room to pick up whatever fragments they could. Such discourses were usually based on the liturgical texts or the content of the feast. They were not exegetical commentaries but free-ranging reflections drawn from the whole Bible combined with readings from "the book of experience"—almost like the abbot's public *lectio divina*. Often they played out as a counterpoint to the obvious themes of the day. Although some sermons aim to provide pious entertainment for the monks, mostly they emphasised the moral or behavioural message. The Bible was understood as a mirror—a source of self-knowledge and guidance—and so it was the moral or tropological sense of the Scriptures which received the most attention. These practical instructions on how to live were like corporate spiritual direction—for them to succeed in this role, much care was taken to make them as friendly and all-inclusive as possible. Often this was done by moving from "I" to "We" to "They" and only slowly to "You." Above all, such sermons were meant to instil confidence and hope in the hearts of the monks—trust in God's mercy and in the efficacy of the monastic observances.

The feasts for which sermons were prescribed were the following: The First Sunday of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, all the solemnities of the Virgin Mary (Purification, Annunciation, Nativity, Assumption), John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, All Saints, and the Dedication of the local church.[54] Since all Cistercian abbots were obliged to speak on these days, and some of their discourses are preserved, it is possible to make comparisons. In particular, we can begin to grasp some of the specificity of Bernard's style by comparing his discourses with those of Guerric and Aelred. All three preached in the same biblical manner on the same feasts against the backdrop of the same liturgical texts and in the context of the same lifestyle. Their sermons share many common traits, but they are also individuated by the personality and style of the preacher and by the community situation which they are addressing.

Although there is some variation of opinion about the nature of these discourses, it seems likely that, although a rudimentary version of them may have been preached to the community on one or several

[54] *Ecclesiastica Officia* 67.3–5; Choisselet and Vernet, p. 190.

occasions, the published version is essentially a literary work, polished for a wider readership. The use of stenographers and the extent of critical revision varied from instance to instance. Probably Bernard, at least, spoke a kind of pidgin when he addressed the community—a Latin larded with enough proto-French words and constructions to make it more widely comprehensible, even to *conversi*. This would never do for publication. Despite the inclusion of many allusions to the response of the monks or to something happening that necessitated curtailing the discourse, the discourses as we have them are works to be read, even though the authors are at pains to give the impression they are speaking to an audience. To have delivered these discourses as they are to a monastic chapter after Prime, in the early hours of the morning, would have been both pretentious and bombastic. Bernard was neither.

Guerric's sermons show the easy elegance of one long versed in elevated discourse; they reflect his mellow and gentle personality although they demonstrate that he was not afraid to address directly the shortcomings of his monks.[55] Aelred, by contrast, seems to have spent less time in preparation and never got round to revising the stenographers' versions. There are brilliant expositions of practical monastic virtues, but there is a certain carelessness about their setting. One encounters dead ends, logical leaps, repetitions of earlier material, and conclusions left hanging. Compared to Guerric's discourses, Aelred's seem rough and ready, but all the more attractive for seeming less mannered and somewhat spontaneous. The content is certainly worthwhile—less subtle than Guerric's, but all the more suitable for monks because of that. By contrast, Isaac of Stella, in the next generation, also preached on the same feasts in a way that reflects the two stages of his life. Sometimes it is the scholar who speaks, at other times the monks.

Bernard's liturgical discourses, among which we must also include the Lenten series based on Psalm 90 (91), are distinctive.[56] They have been thoroughly reworked for publication without losing contact with the original oral presentations. Often, as for example in the case of the Advent sermons, the individual sermons in a series form a coherent whole, with a comprehensive coverage of the different aspects of the particular feast approached from different directions and with almost

[55] See M. Casey, "The Failing of Monks in Guerric's Sermons," *CSQ* 43.4 (2008), 439–463.

[56] SBO 4–5.

no overlap. It seems that at some stage an attempt has been made to integrate the content.[57] Bernard's reflections on the feast are rarely predictable: he seems to take for granted that the monks themselves can reach a certain level of reflection; instead of repeating the obvious he presupposes it and heads off in an unexpected direction, as a sort of counterpoint to the feast. His vocabulary is noble and clear; his presentation smooth, accessible, and not without a touch of humour. To read his liturgical discourses in the best possible disposition, it is necessary to enter into the spirit of the feast being celebrated, to surround oneself with the liturgical texts, and to allow oneself to enter an affective bonding with Christ as he passes through the various mysteries of his life for our sake.[58]

Jean Leclercq has noted Bernard's biblical style.[59] Scarcely a line passes without a biblical reference of some kind or another, and often his vocabulary and syntax reflect that of the Vulgate. This is more than the quoting of authorities or the use of proof-texts. It is the unconscious outpouring of a man whose daily awareness was saturated by the words of the Bible. In our modern critical texts there are many footnotes identifying the sources of these reminiscences, but Bernard spoke and wrote without footnotes; in fact, at that time even chapter and verse divisions in the Bible were unknown. The scriptural texts that came so easily to his mind and flowed so fluently onto the page were the spontaneous product of a life dedicated to meditation on the Word of God.

This aspect of Bernard's writing did not escape the sharp eye of John of Salisbury, whom Bernard described as a friend.[60] This is what he has to say about Bernard, in a passage comparing him to his theological adversary Gilbert of Poitiers.

> The abbot for his part, as his works show, was so distinguished a preacher that I can think of no-one after St Gregory comparable to him: he surpassed all in the elegance of his style and was so saturated in the Holy Scriptures that he could fully expound every subject in the words of the prophets and apostles. For he had made their speech his own, and

---

[57] See Claudio Stercal, *Il "medius adventus": Saggio di lettura degli scritti di Bernardo di Clairvaux* (Rome, 1992).

[58] See Alberich Altermatt, "Christus pro nobis: Die Christologie Bernhards von Clairvaux in den *Sermones per annum*," *AC* 33 (1977), 3–176.

[59] "De quelques procédés du style biblique de S. Bernard," in *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits 3* (Rome, 1969), pp. 249–266.

[60] Ep. 361; SBO 8, p. 307, line 13.

> could hardly converse or preach or write a letter except in the language of Scripture.[61]

But, of course, Bernard used the Bible in his own particular way. In 1322 Robert of Basevorn wrote in his treatise *The Form of Preaching*.

> Now about Saint Bernard. It must be realized that his method is "without method," exceeding the style and capability of almost all men of genius. He more than the rest stresses Scripture in all his sayings, so that scarcely one statement is his own which does not depend on an authority in the Bible or on a multitude of authorities. His procedure is always devout, always artful. He takes a certain theme or something in place of it—i.e., some matter which he intends to handle—and begins it artfully, divides it in two, three or many members, confirms it and ends it, using every rhetorical color so that the whole work shines with a double glow, earthly and heavenly; and this, as it seems to me, invites to devotion those who understand more feelingly, and helps more in the novel methods we are now discussing.[62]

Nowhere is this originality more evident than in his discourses on the Song of Songs. This masterpiece, of all Bernard's writings, is the most effective means of making the acquaintance of the heart and mind of its author.[63] As with the liturgical discourses, it is possible to understand the specificity of Bernard's style by a comparison with other expositions on this biblical book.[64] What strikes the reader immediately is Bernard's freedom: he is not tied down to a laborious analytic commentary, but soars aloft wherever his thoughts carry him. No doubt this is why the work is entitled *super cantica* and not *in canticum* or *in cantica*. The work was so highly esteemed that the General Chapter commissioned Gilbert of Swineshead and John of Forde to continue the unfinished work. Both did brilliantly, according to their particular gifts, "But who is able to run alongside a giant, to compete with honey

---

[61] John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis* 12; text and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, *The Historia Pontificalis of John of Salisbury* (London, 1952), p. 26.

[62] Translated by Leopold Krul, in James J. Murphy, ed., *Three Rhetorical Arts* (Berkeley, 1971). The text quoted is from Chapter XII of the treatise, p. 131.

[63] For a general treatment of these discourses se M. Casey, *Athirst for God: Spiritual Desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, 1987).

[64] See Friedrich Ohly, *Hohelied-Studien: Grundzüger einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden, 1958). Richard A. Norris Jr., ed., *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, 2003). Mary Dove, trans., *The* Glossa Ordinaria *on the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, 2004).

in sweetness, with a lamb in gentleness, with a lily in whiteness or in brilliance with the sun?"[65]

Bernard's other domestic discourses are of a lesser excellence, but that is to be expected. They come in two blocks, the *De diversis*[66] and what seem to be stenographed summaries collected under the title, *Sententiae*.[67] His early homilies on the Gospel of the Annunciation have been for many an easy approach to the devotional side of Bernard's personality.[68] In contrast, the *Sermo de conversione* preached to the students of Paris appears in literary form more like a treatise.[69]

This permeability between literary genres leads us to an important consideration about all Bernard's writings. They are most sympathetically read if they are viewed through the prism of the *sermo*. This was his area of strength, and he tended to use its techniques in everything that he wrote, even while observing the particular rules and expectations of each genre.

The nature of the monastic *sermo*, exemplified everywhere in Bernard's writings, is clearly described by Aelred in the course of excusing himself for lack of appropriate preparation.

> As you know the usual quiet has not preceded this *sermo*, nor has prayer given it life, nor reading strengthened it, nor meditation adorned it. For a *sermo* that is given to refresh the speaker and edify the hearer it is necessary that quiet prepare the soul of the speaker, that reading give instruction, that meditation strengthen and prayer enlighten.[70]

When Cistercian abbots preached they were not delivering an academic address but sharing the fruit of their own reading, meditation and prayer. Their aim was to form Christ in the hearts of the monks by making available to them the graces which they themselves had received. For us who read these sermons today, dispositions similar to those of the original audience are required: openness, docility, and a willingness to be converted.

---

[65] With apologies to SC 83.6; SBO 2, p. 302, lines 7–9.

[66] SBO 6a. For the most part, these have not yet (2009) been translated into English, though translations exist in other languages.

[67] SBO 6b, pp. 7–255. These have been translated into English by Francis R. Swietek in *The Parables & The Sentences* (Kalamazoo, 2000).

[68] SBO 4, pp. 13–28.

[69] SBO 4, pp. 69–116.

[70] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Sermones* 73.1; Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis [abbreviated henceforth as CCCM] (Turnhout, 1966–), 2b, p. 240.

Bernard was not writing "theology" as this term came to be understood in the Aristotelian century which followed his own. His discourse about God and spiritual realities was framed according to what Jean Leclercq has named "monastic theology."[71]

"Monastic Theology"

The specific qualities of monastic theology demand specific responses from readers—otherwise they will certainly be disappointed and frustrated by their attempts to understand what Bernard has written. It may be described as a "platonising" theology, though this was a baptised Platonism. It preceded the Aristotelian invasion. In Bernard's ambience there was no divorce between "philosophy" and "theology" nor between "spirituality" and "theology." There was a reluctance to multiply the distinctions so cherished in the Schools. Monastic theology aimed at wisdom rather than merely at knowledge. Its objective was to take from the Bible lessons on how to live in accordance with the will of God. Its discourses were not for educational purposes or for objective research: its value was subjective. It was irenic, in that it did not thrive in a climate of controversy and debate. Its favoured skill was rhetoric rather than dialectic. Above all it was a manner of theological reflection and discourse that fitted comfortably within the framework of Cistercian life.

The sources of monastic theology were the streams which daily flowed through the liturgy, but its better proponents used the traditional themes in a new and relevant manner. These sources included the following:

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, often used creatively and imaginatively and quoted from memory;
2. The texts of the liturgy—the daily, weekly, and yearly cycles of prayers and texts—which influenced both the content and the style of discourse;
3. The Fathers of the Church—especially those used in the liturgy and including the Rule of Benedict; other texts according to what the monastic libraries contained or happenstance provided;
4. Classical literature—mostly quoted from memories of school days; the work of the schools and writings of philosophers are cited only rarely, usually by those who had been well educated before entry into monastic life; and

[71] See, for example, *The Love of Learning*, pp. 191–235. See also Casey, *Athirst for God* (note 63 above), pp. 32–38.

5. Contemporary sources, including curial and official texts—but very rarely; surprisingly, the early Cistercians rarely quoted their own foundational documents, the *Exordium parvum*, and the *Carta caritatis* in their various stages.

Let us now say something about some of the stylistic features that add quality to the tone of monastic theology in general, and Bernard's writings in particular.

Aesthetic. The first thing that strikes the reader is the beauty of the language.[72] Bernard writes such fluid prose that he has been nicknamed the "mellifluous doctor." His choice of words is often exquisite. "Bernard of Clairvaux perfected the beauty of his words in order to make them worthy of expressing the word of God."[73] It is as though he were constantly aware of the emotional weighting that different words have, and he frames his sentences in such a way that the feelings are touched. His approach is circular rather than linear, synthetic rather than analytic, poetic and even lyric rather than straightforward. An habitual advocate, he does not operate merely on the cognitive level: he is almost always concerned to motivate. His writing is seductive as, it seems, his personality was.

Behavioural. In interpreting the Bible Bernard was most interested in its moral meaning, in how the inspired text could serve as a guide and incentive for good living. His own preaching follows the same pattern. Part of his office as an abbot in the Benedictine tradition was to teach—to communicate to his monks the beliefs and values that undergird monastic observance. There is always a practical aspect to his doctrine to point the way to a more satisfying living of monastic life and, thereby, greater fidelity to the call of Christ.

Christocentric. Bernard's mysticism was grounded on the Bible rather than on later theological developments.[74] As a result, we find comparatively little emphasis on the Trinity and a strong concentration on the person of Jesus.[75] Sometimes this is interpreted as a rather

---

[72] See Jean Leclercq, "Essais sur l'esthétique de S. Bernard," *Recueil 4*, pp. 35–77.

[73] Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "*Verbum Dei et verba Bernardi*: The Function of Language in Bernard's Second Sermon for Peter and Paul," in *Bernardus Magister* (note 13 above), p. 149.

[74] See M. Casey, "Bernard's Biblical Mysticism: Approaching SC 74," *Studies in Spirituality* 4 (1994), 12–30.

[75] See J.-M. Déchanet, "La Christologie de saint Bernard," *AC* 9 (1953), 78–91. Amatus van den Bosch, "Présupposés à la Christologie Bernardine," *Cîteaux* 8

sentimental attachment to the humanity of Christ, but it is stronger than that. The focus of Bernard's devotion is the Word—not the pre-incarnated Word, but the Word re-ascended. The mystery of the Ascension is the key to understanding Bernard's Christocentric devotion, for it is precisely in the return to the Father that the true or spiritual quality of Christ is manifested, and it is that ascent which we also are invited to follow. No doubt that is why Bernard used all his rhetorical skill to convince the General Chapter of 1151 that there should be a procession each year on the Solemnity of the Ascension—despite the Order's well-known aversion to the processions much loved at Cluny.

Devotional. Bernard's theology is subject-oriented rather than object-oriented. In this type of approach, subjective experience is a meaningful element in any discussion of God.[76] His discourses are directed towards the intersection of faith and experience. Faith is not without cognitive content but is primarily the assent given by the will to propositions which transcend the grasp of reason. It is this assent which brings about the conformity of will which "marries the soul to God."[77] One of the consequences of this is that *affectus* is not absent from discourse about God, and, therefore, the communication of this *affectus* is a principal goal in speaking.[78] Bernard's words are intended to inspire and motivate the monks to give space to prayer and contemplation. Like Guerric's discourse on psalmody, Bernard's expositions are intended to "arouse devotion." This will be genuine only to the extent that we are reading Bernard's text simultaneously with "the book of experience." In other words, the optimal method for reading most of what Bernard wrote is *lectio divina*.[79]

(1957), 5–17, 86–105. Note, however, the important qualifications in Claude Bodard, "Christus-Spiritus: Incarnation et résurrection dans la théologie de saint Bernard," in *Stint Bernardus van Clairvaux: Gedenkboek* (Rotterdam, 1953), pp. 89–104.

[76] For a study of the whole background of Bernard's teaching on experience, see Ulrich Köpf, *Religiöse Erfahrung in der Theologie Bernhards von Clairvaux* (Tübingen, 1980).

[77] See SC 83.3; SBO 2, p. 299, line 21.

[78] Another is that Bernard's chapter discourses are designed to prepare the way for contemplative experience by strengthening the "obedience of faith" through a more pragmatic form of obedience such as is practised in cenobitic life.

[79] See M. Casey, "The Book of Experience: The Western Monastic Art of *Lectio Divina*," *Eye of the Heart* 2 (2008), 5–31.

Irenic. Bernard is not at his best when he is involved in theological controversy—although he is competent enough to engage in dialectic. His sermons neither extend theology's frontiers nor defend them; rather, they reflect well-known and commonly accepted doctrines, presented in a way that stimulates the reader to further meditation. At times he is sardonic or ironic, but usually this is more amusing than alienating. His attitude to wrongdoers in his discourses is one that is more likely to excuse than accuse, and he achieves his goal by holding up a mirror so that the monks may see what is presently invisible—the reality of their behaviour on the one hand or, on the other, the high ideal to which they are called.

Without an appreciation of what Bernard and other monastic authors of his period were trying to do, reading them will not make much sense, and penetrating to their message will be difficult. It is also useful to have some notion of Bernard's favoured themes and topics, and it is this area that will be discussed in the next section.

The Message

Bernard's thought evolved and became explicit within the context of his own spiritual journey and the challenges which he faced in the course of an eventful life. His teaching is not merely a universalisation of his own personality, but it did gain depth and extent because of the experiences and exigencies of his career, rather than through the evolution of its own inner logic. As we have seen, to overlook the "existential" aspect of Bernard's teaching is to miss a fundamental Bernardine quality. He was not concerned with communicating abstract, universal ideas but was a passionate crusader for the values in which he believed. In this section I will discuss five overlapping areas which the reader will find recurring throughout Bernard's writing.[80]

Desire for God

Bernard was a monk, and throughout his life he remained committed to achieving the goal of monastic life: an experiential union with God.

---

[80] What follows has been treated more fully in M. Casey, "Le spirituel: Les grands thèmes Bernardins," in *Bernard de Clairvaux: histoire, mentalités, spiritualité: colloque de Lyon-Cîteaux-Dijon* (Paris, 1992), pp. 605–635.

When events forced him to make compromises which rendered this goal more remote, he experienced a strong sense of guilt.[81] Spiritual desire was not merely a topic discussed by the ancient philosophers and debated by theologians. It lay at the heart of his own spirituality.[82]

In the West the treatment of desire for God was shaped principally by the tradition associated with Augustine of Hippo.[83] Much Augustinian spirituality found entry into the monasteries by the Rule of Saint Benedict and through Gregory the Great. Continuity is evident in the vocabulary, imagery, and theology of spirituality which became general in Western monasticism and which was transmitted and reinforced by the strong Augustinian presence in the readings used at Vigils. It is this diffuse Augustinianism which provided Bernard with the foundation of his spiritual doctrine.

Four elements of Augustine's presentation of desire for God figure prominently in Bernard's reflections:

1. Desire is based on the experience of absence: "Desiderium ergo quid est, nisi rerum absentium concupiscentia?"[84] Desire, as such, is neutral. Its moral quality is determined by its object.
2. The experience of desire is affective, located within the will rather than in the intellect.
3. Desire for God results from the fundamental human need. Movement towards God is an imperative of being, not merely a voluntary option.
4. Desire for God finds its consummation in eternal life; it is necessarily eschatological.

For Augustine, desire for God is the mode of loving God proper to those who are yet on pilgrimage, away from the *patria*. It is the negativity of the experience which motivates the individual to seek God

---

[81] See Christopher Holdsworth, "Sanctity and Secularity in Bernard of Clairvaux," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 75 (1995), 160–161, where the author discusses the incident in John of Forde's life of the hermit Wulfric, whose prayers Bernard solicited because of the uneasiness he felt about his involvement in the solution of the Anacletan schism.

[82] See Casey, *Athirst for God* (note 63 above). Also Lode van Hecke, *Le désir dans l'expérience religieuse: L'homme réunifié: Relecture de Saint Bernard* (Paris, 1990).

[83] See Isabelle Bochet, *Saint Augustin et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1982).

[84] Augustine, *In Ps 118* 8, 4, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina [abbreviated henceforth as CCSL] 40, p. 1688.

by an act of the will and by a lifelong struggle. Desire thus leads to a whole program of living to ensure that lower and more accessible sources of fulfilment do not become substitutes for God. The images used by Augustine are standard. They include hunger and thirst. Various terms denoting heat are used. Desire is associated with tears and sighs. It is a stretching out, *intentio*, a search, journey, ascent, or return to God. The same metaphors are continued in later tradition, by Gregory and Bernard among others.

The specificity of the Augustinian position is that desire for God was seen not merely as an affective state translated into a voluntary movement but as operating at an ontological level. Desire for God is constitutive of human nature. There is in every human being an innate, pre-elective capacity or compatibility, an orientation to God. Theological buttressing of this position comes from Augustine's anthropological reflections on the theme of the *imago Dei*, and is epitomised in that most famous of patristic quotations: "Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te."

Bernard neither explored nor expounded the finer distinctions of Augustine's treatment of the theme of the *imago Dei*, but he utilised it, influenced by contemporary variations which made the restoration of divine likeness a dynamic program of Christian living. As a result his reflections on the topic often occur in the context of exhortation. Inevitably this moral intent highlights the negative aspects of his anthropology. It was based, however, on a very optimistic view. A human being is a noble creature, one that is by nature, i.e., by God's gift, capable of God, *capax Dei*. The morality Bernard preaches is entirely a matter of *noblesse oblige*. In his view the soul can grow only through love. "There is nothing in all created things which has the capacity to fill the creature who has been made to God's image, except the Love which is God."[85] For the soul to give itself to lesser reality is a denial of its destiny.

Desire is generated by the recognition of the distance between the present and the hoped-for future. It looks forward, fed by a confidence that what God has presaged in nature will be finally fulfilled. "For what cannot be safely dared when the soul sees itself as God's excellent image and distinguished likeness?"[86] Bernard's view of desire

[85] SC 18.6; SBO 1, p. 107, lines 27–29.
[86] SC 83.1; SBO 2, pp. 298–299.

is grounded in an understanding of human reality in terms of its Godward orientation and on a lively faith in eternal life. It is an upwardly dynamic approach which is sometimes termed "ascensionist." This no doubt explains Bernard's particular devotion to the mystery of Christ's ascension and perhaps also to the assumption of our Lady. Both cases are examples of the glorious fulfilment of potential present in every human being.

Reform and Discipline

The period of reform associated with the name of Gregory VII aroused in the Church a desire for renewal which went far beyond the limited improvements its proponents advocated. Many, like Saint Peter Damian, felt that more radical measures were required. Their remedy was twofold: a sharper focus on Gospel values; and a serious attempt to implement these in micro-churches, kept aloof from the worldliness which had invaded the Church at large. As the 11th century progressed, large numbers of spiritualising movements began to gain a following for themselves. These tended towards severity and discipline, particularly regarding poverty and separation from the world. And so, many of them proved to be short-lived, scarcely surviving their originators.

Somewhat later a second generation of monastic reform appeared, less concerned with the pursuit of abstract values than with fidelity to the authority of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Above all these reformers sought the sanction of authority to practise the whole Rule, living according to its authentic meaning instead of whittling away its prescriptions by an ever-increasing number of mitigations. The Cistercian enterprise succeeded because it rode the crest of the wave of reform.

This was the only form of monasticism Bernard experienced. Its values were the ones which he internalised and to which he later gave brilliant expression. He became identified with the Cistercian reform. His spirituality was concretely incarnated in living, exploring, and expounding the values of this ideal. It was not a generic spirituality. Bernard's experience and vision of the spiritual life cannot be separated from its specific monastic ambience.

This factor is responsible for three salient characteristics. Bernard's world view is always in continuity with the main lines of Western tradition. His personal preference is almost always for the stricter option: discipline, asceticism, and austerity are integral components of his spirituality. Paradoxically, it was this uncompromising zeal for

traditional beliefs and values that gave Bernard relevance in a changing world.

Bernard wrote from the tradition he lived. Saint Benedict's Rule is a potent force in his thinking. His earliest polemics concerned points of monastic observance. The *Apologia* immediately springs to mind, but there are many other examples in his letters, treatises (*De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae* and *De Praecepto et Dispensatione*), and discourses. The heavy irony of these passages is a signal that Bernard is speaking from his own values and not merely attacking abuses. The passion is real, because every erosion of monasticity touched him personally.

This monastic ideal is progressively projected upon the Church and upon secular society. Bernard became a social critic. His appreciation of the past led him to reject many "deviations" and "innovations," especially if they seemed likely to win a following. But he did more than orate; he sought by the exercise of influence and through positive action to change the course of events. The hard-line attitudes which determined his public interventions are also present in his thinking and writing.

Bernard preached an austere life. He wrote to Henry of Sens: "These are the insignia of the monk: hard work, the hidden life and voluntary poverty."[87] His famous letter to the monks of Aulps is equally challenging.[88] Primitive Cistercian life was rugged and physically demanding. It was a challenge to those who were old, weak, lukewarm, or of delicate upbringing; a frontier life possible only with a great deal of motivation, enthusiasm, idealism. It appealed mostly to vigorous and high-minded young men. Bernard was such, as were those whom he attracted to the monasteries. So great was the distance between the thoughtless pleasures of underemployed youth and the rigid discipline of the primitive Cistercians that a transition was only possible by a radical conversion experience aided by identification with an idealised model. Paradoxically, like Thomas Merton, Bernard drew his recruits by emphasising the hardships they would encounter.

Bernard attained a measure of relevance precisely by being alternative. He did not parrot the platitudes of the age but gave expression to latent values and aspirations. Here his conservatism helped more than hindered. He was not propagating new ideas to be painfully processed

[87] Ep. 42.37; SBO 7, p. 130, lines 21–22.
[88] Ep. 142.1; SBO 7, pp. 340–341.

at a rational level but was giving new sparkle to beliefs and values passively absorbed in the process of socialisation. This made his message highly acceptable, and the enthusiasm it inspired lent confidence to Bernard's presentation, so he wrote freely, without having to be careful. His words became more transparent, and the attractive personality of their author shone through more effectively. He inculcated both institutional and personal reform, but his words were not mere preaching. They were received as a prophetic call to the task of reviving old values in the changed conditions of the contemporary world.

Love

The age of Bernard was in love with love. There are many elements in this prevailing mood. They include the traditional Christian teaching on the primacy of love, the affective spirituality of the Augustinian tradition, a certain fascination with the Song of Songs, widespread devotion to Mary Magdalene "who loved much," the popularity of romantic poetry both in the emerging vernacular languages and in Latin, and a growing intellectualism which made possible an interest in Ovid and in classical notions of friendship. The adult recruits who swarmed into Clairvaux were certainly not immune from such influences. Nor was Bernard.

From the letter to Fulk in 1120 to the discourses dictated mere months before his death, Bernard repeatedly broached the subject of love. In part this is an element of his Augustinian inheritance. But even though Bernard's emphasis seems not to diverge qualitatively from that of his major sources, there is a difference in that love is such a pervasive and structural element in Bernard's spiritual scheme and is subjected to such probing analysis. Bernard's teaching on love is worth expanding.

His chief interest seems to be in its progress through various stages from rudimentary instinct to the ultimate spiritual fulfilment. This lifelong emphasis is evident from the letter to Guigo,[89] later developed into the treatise *On Loving God* to the final discourse on the Song of Songs dictated in the months before his death. Bernard uses the Augustinian notion of *ordinatio caritatis* as a means of detailing a program of virtuous living which finds its unity and energy in love. No

[89] Ep. 11; SBO 7, pp. 52–60.

matter how opprobrious love's initial objects, love itself is not to be suppressed. Rather it is to be redirected, ordered. Love remains itself; what changes is that it is progressively directed towards more appropriate targets until human love is fixed wholly on subsisting divine Love.

Bernard's key interest is in the development of love, which coincides exactly with the total human progress of the individual. Human beings are social animals; to live other than sociably is to deny one's nature and to impede further progress. Other virtues or qualities have a potential for ambivalence, only love *necessarily* indicates a growth in godliness and has its goal not just in sanctification but in deification.[90]

Monastic tradition had always evinced an interest in the phenomenology of growth. Bernard expounded not only the steps of humility and pride but also the grades of truth, the stages of conversion, the progressive forms of freedom, and all the changing rhythms of monastic experience. *On Loving God* is not so much a devotional treatise as a global presentation of spiritual growth viewed through the prism of love. Bernard is speaking about the human experience of love, expressed in terms of self-transcendence.

Bernard's description of love has a theological bracketing. Building on the traditional text of 1 Jn. 4:8, "Deus caritas est," he affirms that love is the very being of God: "Ipse ex ea vivit,"[91] "Ipse est unde amat"[92] [God lives by love, God is the one from whom love proceeds]. Love is ultimately a participation in the life of God. It is at its most refined when it is directed back to its source.[93] Thus our love follows upon the experience of being loved by God: "Ipse prior dilexit nos." To use another Augustinian term, all our love for God is a matter of *redamare*.[94]

> Nobody who loves has any doubt that he is himself loved. This is why God's love for us follows our love for him, just as it precedes it. How can anybody be slow to return love among those whom God has loved although they did not yet love him? He loved. I repeat, he loved. You have the guarantee of his love in the Spirit and the witness of it in Jesus crucified. A double and most solid proof of God's love in our regard! Christ died and deserves to be loved. The Spirit exerts influence and

---

[90] See Pacificus Delfgaauw, *Saint Bernard, maître de l'Amour divin* (Paris, 1994), especially pp. 188–194.

[91] *De diligendo deo* [Dil.] 35; SBO 3, p. 149, line 17.

[92] SC 59.1; SBO 2, p. 136, line 8.

[93] SC 83.4; SBO 2, p. 300, lines 26–28.

[94] See SC 83.6; SBO 2, p. 302, line 2: "in reddendo amorem."

> causes us to love. Christ gives us a reason for loving. The Spirit supplies us with the possibility.[95]

Rhetorical practice, reinforced by trinitarian theology, delighted in triple distinctions. Bernard himself used them repeatedly, but he also enjoyed breaking the conventions. Of love he speaks about not three but four phases.

> A natural, infantile, self-indulging love which breaks through the husk of self sufficiency to reach out to exploit external reality. Love at this phase is characterised by *curiositas, cupiditas* and *concupiscentia*.[96] If not transcended it distorts the soul by fixing its attention on unworthy objects. Bernard's optimistically sees great potential in this natural, selfish beginning. The innate nobility of the soul causes it to fall in love with external objects and so leads it to a sense of solidarity, zeal for justice, compassion and ultimately to a felt devotion to the humanity of Christ.
>
> Slowly a more spiritual love develops. One loves God as a source of benefits for oneself and therefore to be cultivated, even at the expense of alternative avenues of gratification.
>
> Mingling with God is powerful medicine. The divine attractiveness induces forgetfulness of self. Progressively love becomes more disinterested.
>
> Does love ever become totally free of selfishness during our earthly sojourn? Bernard is unsure. But he knows that the next life is one of total absorption in God. This is the goal to which the present tends, but it is never perfectly experienced here below.

Human beings are a complex of different affective movements occasioned by the variety of external objects. In itself each of these objects is good and the natural attractions towards them wholesome, but the integrity of the person depends on observing the correct priorities in love, according to the *ordo* imposed by the nature of things. For Bernard this is simple: the more spiritual the object of affection, the higher priority it is to be given. The upright will is one which attaches itself most firmly to what is above it, to God and the world of spiritual reality; it refuses to bend down to what is beneath it.

The monastery is a *schola dilectionis* which teaches the monk to seek the better gifts.[97] To give priority to the *unum necessarium*, some re-education of the natural affective tendencies is needed. The effect of

---

[95] Ep. 107.8; SBO 7, p. 273, lines 6–11.

[96] See Eva Carlotta Rava, *Caída del hombre y retorno a la verdad en los primeros tratados de San Bernardo de Claraval* (Buenos Aires, 1986), particularly pp. 65–111.

[97] *De diversis* 121; SBO 6a, pp. 398–399.

such a process is progressive conversion towards God. It commences at the behavioural level: "Studet conformare vivendo."[98] After a long period of fidelity the will cleaves more closely to God's, and a certain fusion results. The three phases of the spiritual ascent are clearly delineated. An innate movement towards God, a willed incorporation of this in a lifelong manner of behaviour, and its outcome in spiritual union.[99] The *ordinatio caritatis* inevitably has a negative aspect. It ensures the primacy of movement towards God by suppressing all alternative attractions. An unheralded paronamasia would seem to indicate the equivalence of *deificatio* and *defaecatio*.[100] For Bernard, our being divinised is largely a matter of eliminating all that is ignoble in us. This purging is accomplished through the active life of the virtues.

The Practice of the Virtues

As a pastor Bernard had to balance his teaching on the omnipotence of grace with the pastoral necessity of encouraging his monks to be energetic in their response. He was successful in arriving at a dynamic interplay of these polarities, so there is a strong moral cast to his mysticism. The more directly his words are intended for monks, the more emphasis there is on the need for persevering practice of all the virtues, as the discourses on the Song of Songs attest.

Perhaps the most graphic illustration of the role of the virtues is to be found in the *Parables*.[101] The reader is impressed by the experiential immediacy of the stories. Here is more than exhortation. Bernard endeavours to impart an understanding of the dynamics of behaviour and its relation to the global movement of life. Vice is slavery. Virtue is liberation. Nothing can be achieved through one's own strength; everything is possible by the action of God, sought in prayer and given

---

[98] SC 27.4; SBO 1, p. 184, line 20.

[99] See Fredéric Nef, "*Caritas dat caritatem.* la métaphysique de la charité dans les Sermons sur le Cantique des cantiques et l'ontologie de la contemplation," in Rémi Brague, ed., *Saint Bernard et la Philosophie* (Paris, 1993), pp. 87–108.

[100] Dil. 28; SBO 3, p. 143, lines 13–15.

[101] See Mette B. Bruun, *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Leiden, 2007). Massimo Oldoni, "Bernardo scrittore: le 'Parobolae,'" in *Bernardo Cisterciense: Atti del XXVI Convegno storico internazionale: Todi, 8–11 ottobre 1989* (Spoleto, 1990), pp. 291–301. I published translations and introductions in *CSQ* during 1983–87; a shorter form of these was published by Cistercian Publications in 2000.

in love. The eighth parable has a single severe message which much be presumed to animate them all: even though monastic profession makes amends for a sinful past, forgiveness is forfeited if the monk does not persevere in his fidelity.

Bernard is somewhat cavalier in detailing the precise role of each virtue; what is important to him is not the scientific analysis of specific functions as much as the conviction that all the virtues need to cooperate to bring us back to God. To illustrate the ascent, Bernard, as in *De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae* (*The Steps of Humility and Pride*) describes the way down. This consists in a slide through eight imperceptible stages.

1. Complacency: Refusing to take one's liabilities seriously.
2. Negligence: Inability to endure hardship or resist temptation, desiring comfort, lacking energy for good, *taedium, acedia*.
3. Curiosity: Defective self-knowledge causes an excessive interest in external things, frivolity of mind and heart.
4. Concupiscence: Desire is enkindled by the cavalcade of curiosities. This can become so strong that "in many cases concupiscence seems already to have crossed the border and have become experience."
5. Consent: After desire comes the act: the forbidden pleasure, sanctioned and approved by the will.
6. Habit: One becomes enslaved through mere repetition; addicted, one seeks relief rather than enjoyment.
7. Contempt: Despair follows the discovery of the extent to which one is debased and made unhappy by evil habit.
8. Malice: Malice is the final stage in the process of self destruction: "the experience and delight in sin," a total inability to distinguish self-will from what is objectively right.

The decline is inevitable and will continue until a decision is made to reverse the process. There is a need for the will to initiate a radical change of direction. Conversion is an integral component of Bernard's spiritual doctrine. He presupposes this experience in his monks. Without the energy which conversion generates, Bernard's whole system falls. Ideally conversion would lead a man to enter a Cistercian monastery. Here the gifts of the Holy Spirit can continue the process of restoration, and the convert is helped by rule and pastoral action to live in radical conformity with the Gospel. Progressively, then, he

arrives at that perfect freedom, which is enjoyment in good (*liberum complacitum)*:[102] a taste (*sapor*) for what is spiritual.

This is the process described, especially by the first two parables: the captive is started on the road to return by God's gift of fear, hope, and desire. Then follow the cardinal virtues: prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. Humility and faith lead to prayer and thence to the final outcome: perfect charity. The hinge of the whole process is self-knowledge. One who lacks it sinks into complacency, and the downward spiral begins. Self-knowledge leads to fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom. Bernard counsels Pope Eugenius to be very realistic in his assessment of himself and his conduct, to capitalise on his assets and to compensate for his liabilities.[103] This is more than a vague feeling. It is concrete and detailed confrontation with the evidence of one's own life and the willingness to plan the future in accordance with reality.

Self-knowledge is the seedbed not only of right living but also of prayer. In the parables it is the realisation of the urgency of the situation that impels the search for prayer. All prayer has as its starting point this dual recognition of our own neediness and of God's willingness to help. Prayer offered and answered is one means by which one is bonded to God. Such prayer is triggered by troubled times, by the interaction of faith and self-knowledge. He falls, he sees that he has fallen, he diagnoses the cause and desires the remedy. Recognising that help can come only from outside himself, he cries out to the Lord.

Most of Bernard's writings were generated by pastoral concern. They aim at improving the spiritual quality of his monks' lives. While he had unstinting confidence in the power of grace, he also understood the need for persevering effort. He saw clearly that failing to exercise oneself in the virtues undermines the capacity to respond to grace and ultimately retards the movement towards union with God.

Contemplation

All the themes so far explored have centred implicitly on unity. By nature human beings have a capacity for union with God. This, however, needs to be nurtured by a persevering choice of appropriate practical options so that a person keeps progressing through the various levels of love for God and neighbour and the practice of all the virtues.

---

[102] *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 11; SBO 3, p. 173, lines 23–24.
[103] *De consideratione* [Csi.] 2.20; SBO 3, pp. 427–428.

The end result is not the triumph of individual achievement but the total evacuation of the superficial "self." It is union with God, given and experienced without any restriction. "Ubi unitas, ibi perfectio": where there is unity there is perfection.[104] In this ultimate unity each human being will be totally integrated, without internal dividedness, all will be joined in an inseparable communion of fellowship and all alike will so cleave to God as to become one spirit.

Bernard uses sparingly the technical language of mysticism and contemplation, but it is clear that he is fully informed about the reality.[105] There are no arcane sources. In general he follows western usage in his vocabulary and imagery of mystical experience. His use of *excessus mentis*, for instance, has its roots in the Vulgate Bible, in Cassian, Augustine, and more rarely in Gregory the Great.

"Theoric contemplation" seizes the mind, as it were by violence, and bears it aloft. The ordinary activities of the body cease, and the ecstatic mind transcends itself. But this experience is not sought in itself, nor is it the result of techniques. For Bernard it is a matter of self-forgetfulness. Ecstasy is being so much in love that everything else is ignored.

> In this second kind [of spiritual marriage] there is, now and then, an experience of ecstasy (*excessus*) and a recession from bodily senses so that *the soul is so aware of the Word that it is no longer aware of itself*. This happens when the mind, enticed by the unimaginable sweetness of the Word, is somehow stolen from itself. It is seized and snatched away from itself so that it may find pleasure in the Word.[106]

This text introduces us to a theme that must be mentioned but cannot be developed here: spiritual marriage. This experience is one of being joined to the Word in an intimate embrace. In SC 83, written in the year before his death, Bernard reiterates his basic premise that the experience follows the soul's total union of will with God's. It is conditioned by the measure of God-imitating love present in behaviour. In other words it is the outcome of obedience, subjection, and total renunciation of self and, as such, is more likely to occur at the end of life than at the beginning.

---

[104] Csi. 2.15; SBO 3, p. 423, line 24.

[105] See Jean Leclercq, "L'expérience mystique d'après S. Bernard de Clairvaux," in *Recueil 5*, pp. 403–414.

[106] SC 85.13; SBO 2, pp. 315–316.

Bernard emphasises that the peak experience is infrequent and of short duration and is subject to alternation.[107] The fluctuating awareness of the presence of grace is described in more personal terms as the experience of the arrival and departure of the Word in the soul. It is the absence of the Word which makes the soul aware of the intensity of its desire.

> You might ask how it is that I know the Word has arrived, since all his ways are beyond scrutiny. I know because the Word is living and active. As soon as he arrives within, he shakes to life my sleepy soul. He moves, softens and wounds my heart which previously had been hard, stony and unhealthily intact. The Word begins to root up and destroy, to build and to plant. He waters the arid lands and brings light to the gloom; he opens up what was closed and sets to fire what was frigid. The twisted roads he makes straight and the rough ways smooth… When the Word departs it is as though you were to remove the fire from beneath a boiling pot. Immediately the water becomes lifeless and lukewarm and begins to cool.

This text illustrates the difficulty of assessing Bernard's mystical status. It could not have been written without some experience of what is described. The language chosen, however, simply recapitulates, in the first person, a chain of scriptural texts describing God's saving intervention. Bernard has brilliantly translated these into experiential terms. His passion and eloquence give a personal witness to the truth of Scripture, but nowhere does his subjectivity obtrude.

Here, more than anywhere else, Bernard's experience may be cited as a source of what he writes. On the one hand he has internalised the Scriptures so fully that there is a predisposition towards close union with God. In *lectio divina* there is, as it were, a foretaste of what is to come, an invitation. On the other hand, there is evidence in his later writings that he also had some more direct experience of God such as we would term mystical, although he described it in purely biblical terms. There was a certain simplicity which made monks accepting of such experiences without becoming preoccupied with them. Nothing that Bernard writes gives the impression that what he describes is not generally available.

---

[107] See Jean Mouroux, "Sur les critères de l'expérience spirituelle d'après les Sermons sur le Cantique des Cantiques," *AC* 9.3–4 (1953), 253–267. Casey, *A thirst for God* (note 63 above), pp. 251–280.

Where to Begin

I am often asked about how to begin a long-term program of reading Bernard. As this article indicates, I think it is useful first to gain a general knowledge of the man, the medium, and message. Together these will serve as a global positioning system as the novice attempts to navigate Bernard's substantial body of work. The next step is to read some shorter texts by Saint Bernard, preferably of the more succulent kind. The memory of this sampling will give some motivation later on to keep reading even when a text seems obscure and arid. I often suggest that new readers begin with the *Parables*; other likely points of first contact with whole texts include the treatises *On the Steps of Humility and Pride* and the *On Loving God*, as well the homilies *In Praise of the Virgin Mother*. Many of the liturgical and other discourses are quite accessible, and the gnomic sayings brought together in the *Sentences* can charm and instruct simultaneously. The *Letters* are a world unto themselves and are great for browsing. To come this far is already a program for a year or two. After that the *Discourses on the Song of Songs* may be entered more fruitfully and with greater facility. They pose a challenge to most potential readers, but reward abundantly those who persevere with them. It is 46 years since I began reading Bernard—as long as it took to construct the Jerusalem Temple—and I discover new delights almost as often as I approach his writing. To any who may wonder whether the challenges outweigh the advantage I say, "Read Bernard; it may change your life."

BERNARD AND WILLIAM OF SAINT THIERRY

E. Rozanne Elder

From his death in 1148[1] until the 20th century, William of Saint Thierry was best known, when he was known at all, as the biographer of Bernard of Clairvaux[2] and a man who was *Bernardo percarus*.[3] Many of his works were attributed to Bernard or to other well known writers. Twice only is he portrayed in medieval manuscripts, and then in historiated initials at the beginning of the *Vita Prima Bernardi*.[4] Yet in the judgement of Bernard McGinn, William "yields to no twelfth-century mystic in the depth and sophistication of his theology."[5] His long eclipse as Bernard's Boswell has been replaced in the last half century by an appreciation of William as a theologian far more speculative and nuanced than Bernard and as a leader in monastic

---

[1] The generally accepted, but not entirely certain, date proposed by pioneering William scholar, Jean-Marie Déchanet, in *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: L'Homme et ses oeuvres* (Bruges, 1942), p. 125. The day of his death, 8 September, is surer than the year. Stanislaus Ceglar, "William of Saint Thierry: The Chronology of his Life With a Study of his Treatise *On the Nature and Dignity of Love*, his Authorship of the *Brevis Commentatio*, the *In Lacu*, and the *Reply to Cardinal Matthew* (diss., The Catholic University of America, 1971), pp. 240–241 [abbreviated henceforth as Ceglar, diss.], argues from references to events in the *Vita Prima Bernardi* (VP), that William died in 1147. Another pioneering scholar, Marie-Madeleine Davy, in her introduction to her editions of the *Lettre aux frères de Mont Dieu* (Paris, 1940), p. 34, puts it at 1148 or 1149. The date of William's birth is also unknown. Ceglar argued with copious evidence from his works that William must have been older than Bernard and that the date of his birth usually given, *c.*1085, should be corrected to 1070 (Ceglar, diss., Chapter VI, pp. 193–241).

[2] Book One of the VP [*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (BHL), nr. 1220]; J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina* (PL), 22 vols (Paris, 1844–64), 185:225A–266B.

[3] *Gallia Christiana* (Paris, 1751), vol. 9, p. 187: "B. Willelmus…S. Bernardo percarus…"

[4] The 12th-century Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek MS 144, f 26r and the 13th-century Berlin, Staatsbibliothek—Preussischer Kulturbesitz MS Lat. 754, f 1r, in which William is represented as a tiny black figure kneeling before an enormous Bernard. For these, I am grateful to James France, *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 2007).

[5] *The Growth of Mysticism. Gregory the Great through the 12th Century*, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, 2 (New York, 1996), p. 225.

renewal. Almost nothing in his background can be documented. A brief *Life* of William,[6] written some half century after his death, identified Liège as his birth place, endowed him with "noble parentage," and claimed an education, almost certainly at the cathedral school of Reims,[7] that left him "adequately skilled in the liberal arts"[8] before he entered the abbey of Saint Nicaise, Reims. His personal and monastic qualities impressed contemporaries enough to lead to his being made abbot of Saint Thierry in succession to his own former prior at Saint Nicaise, Geoffrey,[9] but any family connections that might have contributed to his election remain unknown.

When his election occurred is as uncertain as his background and the years of his birth and death.[10] Uncertain too are the date of his first

---

[6] Ed. A. Poncelet, "Vie ancienne de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Mélanges Godefroid Kurth*, 1 (Liège, 1908), pp. 85–96, and again, ed. Paul Verdeyen, in *Guillelmus a Sancto Theodorico, Opera omnia*, 4, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM) 89 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 117–122; English translation with introduction by David N. Bell, "The *Vita Antiqua* of William of Saint Thierry," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 11 (1976), 246–255.

[7] For a summary of theories on William's education, see David N. Bell, "Greek, Plotinus, and the Education of William of Saint Thierry," *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 30 (1979), 221–248. In an unfortunately never-published paper given at the Medieval Studies Conference at Kalamazoo in 1973, John T. Cummings once demonstrated William's superb command of scholarly rhetorical style in a passage in which he was denouncing superficial scholarly activities.

[8] "…septem liberalibus artibus esset sufficienter imbutus"; *Vita Antiqua*, ed. Poncelet (note 6 above), 1:89.

[9] Geoffrey, who became abbot of Saint-Medard, Soissons, and then, in 1131 at Bernard's recommendation, bishop of Châlons-sur Marne. See M.J. Gut, "Liste critique des évêques de Châlons sur Marne aux XIe et XIIe siècles," *Bulletin philologique et historique* 1958 (Paris, 1959), 117–127, esp. 122–123.

[10] "By 1119": Jean Châtillon, "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, Le Monachisme et les Ecoles: A propos de Rupert de Deutz, d'Abélard et de Guillaume de Conches," *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye du VIe au XXe siècle. Actes du colloque international d'Histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry, 11 au 14 octobre 1976* (Saint-Thierry, 1979), 2:375–394, here 382. "In 1119": Adriaan Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux. Between Cult and History* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996), p. 123; and *Histoire Littéraire de la France* (Paris, 1763) 12:312. "Between 1119–1120": Christopher J. Holdsworth, "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux," *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 45:1–2. "1119–1120": Ceglar, diss., 133, 135 ("One thing can be taken for certain: William was not yet abbot of St. Thierry in 1119 or even in 1120" and "not before 1121"). "1121": Jean Leclercq, "Pour un portrait spirituel de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye* (as above) 2:417. By 1123 William was certainly abbot, for as abbot he signed a charter of Archbishop Reginald of Reims: *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims*, ed. Jeannine Cossé-Durlin (Paris, 1991), #22, p. 199).

encounter with Bernard[11] and William's status—monk or abbot—at the time.[12] When they met, the young Cistercian abbot, recuperating from a near-fatal illness, was living apart from his community at the behest of the bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, William of Champeaux, the former Parisian master who had ordained him as abbot.[13] Whatever the date and whatever his state, the meeting had a life-altering effect on William. As he stepped into the dingy hut[14] and met the ailing Bernard, he straightway recognized in the modest surroundings and in the charismatic young abbot the monastic spirit of the ancient desert fathers,[15] ideals familiar to all Latin monks through the ubiquitous *Conferences* and *Institutes* of Cassian and the *Lives of the Fathers*.

---

[11] Conjectures have ranged from 1116 to 1120. 1116–1117: Manriquez, *Annales Cistercienses*; Bruno S. James, *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (London and New York, 1957), p. 38, n. 1. Between October 1118 and October 1119: Elphège Vacandard, *Vie de Saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols, 4th ed. (Paris, 1927), 1:77, n. 1. 1118: Jean-Marie Déchanet, *William of Saint Thierry: The Man and His Works* (Spencer, 1972), p. 24. Summer of 1119: Christopher J. Holdsworth, "Early Writings," p. 58. October 1119, at the Council of Reims: Damien Van den Eynde, "Les débuts littéraires de saint Bernard," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 19 (1963) 189–198 [abbreviated henceforth as *AC*]; Jean Leclercq, *Recueil des études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits, 3* (Rome, 1962), pp. 343–422. 1119: Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 10 above), p. 121. 1119–1120: Ceglar, diss., pp. 51–52. 1119–1120: Leclercq, "Pour un portrait spirituel de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry" (note 10 above), p. 424 ("avant de devenir abbé de Saint-Thierry"). Between 1119–1121: Anselme Le Bail, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, i:1246.

[12] In the *Vita Prima*, William wrote that the visit occurred while Bernard was convalescing away from his community and that "eum ibi cum quodam abbate altero visitarem" (VP 1.33; PL 185:246). Scholars have conjectured and debated when his election occurred. Bredero argues for 1119 (*Between Cult and History* [note 10 above], p. 123) on the grounds that William had become abbot in 1119 and that friendship could not have developed between the two men had they not been equal in rank; this agrees with the *Histoire Littéraire* 12 (Paris, 1763), p. 312. Ceglar, after meticulously sorting dates and data, argues for "Easter of 1121, or, in any case, not long before or after [that]" (Ceglar, diss., p. 135). William's name, as abbot, begins appearing in extant charters only in 1121 [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), Picardie 249, f. 235, Cambrai Archives Départementales de la Somme H16 (001) (Stein 2015). The intriguing Maurist claim in *Gallia Christiana* 9:186–188, that William had been abbot of Saint Crispin in Hainault ("Crispinium pagi Hainoensis monasterium rexisse fertur antequam S. Theoderici prior, tum abbas crearetur"), cannot be verified, and most scholars disregard it.

[13] The see of Langres, in which diocese Clairvaux is located, being vacant. VP 7.32; PL 180:245.

[14] VP 1.7.33; PL 185:246 "…in suo illo tugurio, quale leprosis in compitis publicis fieri solet."

[15] VP 1.34; PL 185:247: "…et antiquorum Aegyptiorum monachorum patrum nostrorum antiquas semitas, et in eis nostri temporis hominum recentia vestigia."

> [W]hen I regarded the dwelling place and the dweller, that house excited as much reverence in me—as God is my witness—as if I were going up to the altar of God. I was so moved by the gentleness surrounding the man and so longed to live there with him in poverty and simplicity that had the choice been given me, I would have chosen nothing more than to remain there with him to serve him.[16]

The Benedictine and Cistercian became personal friends and allies in pressing for monastic renewal and reform. William seems thereafter to have "frequented" Clairvaux.[17] Whatever hope he may have had of embracing the contemplative life at Clairvaux was shattered shortly after—or possibly shortly before[18]—that first fateful meeting, however. As abbot of Saint Thierry, a Benedictine house just outside Reims, he found himself caught up in the responsibilities of his new office. In the early 12th century, Saint Thierry held and was acquiring and trading numerous properties, not simply in the vicinity of Reims but as far away as Flanders.[19] In addition to his ordinary abbatial duties, which included attendance at various provincial synods, William likely faced additional demands brought on by a decade of harsh weather, famine, and epidemic illness in north-eastern France.[20] Then too, the liturgy at Saint Thierry, which at the turn of the century had adopted the cus-

---

[16] VP 1.33 (PL 185:246D): "…cum considerarem habitationem et habitatorem, tantam mihi, Deum testor, domus ipsa incutiebat reverentiam sui, ac si ingrederer ad altare Dei. Tantaque affectus sum suavitate circa hominem illum, tantoque desiderio in paupertate illa et simplicitate cohabitandi ei, ut si optio illa die mihi data fuisset, nil tam optassem quam ibi cum eo semper manere ad serviendum ei."

[17] VP 7.33; PL 185:246: "Eodem tempore et ego Claram-Vallem, ipsumque frequentare coepi…"

[18] In the same sentence in VP 7.33 (PL 185:246), William wrote that his first visit was made *cum quodam abbate altero*, leading some to date his installation at Saint-Thierry quite early and the Maurists to posit that William had then been superior of the monastery of St Crispin in Hainaut (*Gallia Christiana* 9:187: "Crispinium pagi Hainoensis monasterium rexisse"). Finding no evidence to support either claim, most modern scholars have dismissed it and assumed that in addition to his travelling companion, the "other abbot" was Bernard. Recently, however, Bredero (*Between Cult and History* [note 10 above], pp. 120–121) has argued that "…when they met William was already abbot" because "It is unthinkable that these first contacts between them, as described by William of Saint-Thierry could have occurred before William had become abbot. Differences in status, which were extremely important in medieval times, also weighed heavily in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; consequently, this close contact between Bernard and William could never have occurred if William had still been only a monk."

[19] See Françoise Poirier-Coutansais, *Gallia Monastica I: Les abbayes Bénédictines du diocèse de Reims* (Paris, 1974), p. 152 and cartes 9–10.

[20] *Les annales de Saint-Amand*, ed Philip Grierson, *Les annales de Saint-Pierre de Gand et de Saint-Amand: Annales Blandinienses, Annales Elmarenses, Annales*

tomary of Cluny,[21] was more protracted than that to which William had been accustomed at Saint Nicaise, where the customs of La Chaise Dieu in the Auvergne were observed.[22] By 1131, William, in chorus with other Benedictine abbots, cut back on Cluniac customs, publicly pleading a pressing need for more time to deal "frequently, morning and evening" with their employees and overseers and to enable them to "know the souls of our flocks."[23] The press of abbatial duties seems to have increased in William's eyes the attractiveness of the life of a simple monk in the more austere Cistercian observance.

When Bernard again fell gravely ill, William counted himself blessed to be among the brothers and friends called to his side.[24] When, at another time, William himself was suffering from exhaustion,[25] Bernard dispatched his brother Gerard to Saint Thierry to invite, indeed to summon, William to Clairvaux, there to convalesce or there to die.[26]

Formoselenses, Annales Elnonenses (Brussels 1937), p. 163, recorded the following: "1123 hyemps facta est asperrima; 1125 fames valida fit; 1126 Clades vehemens."

[21] See J. Cossé-Durlin, *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims (XIIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1991), pp. 39–41.

[22] Cossé-Durlin, *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims* (n. 18) notes that, although the *Gallia Christiana* (9:208) asserts that Drogo (abbot 1197–1221) abandoned the casadeean customary for that of Cluny, but there is no supporting evidence.

[23] *Acta primi capituli provincialis ordinis S. Benedicti Remis AD 1131 habiti*, edited originally by U. Berlière in *Documents inédits pour servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de la Belgique*, 1 (Maredsous, 1894), and again by Stanislaus Ceglar, in "William of Saint Thierry and His Leading Role at the First Chapters of the Benedictine Abbots (Reims, 1131, Soissons, 1132)," in *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye du VIe au XXe siècle. Actes du colloque international d'Histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry, 11 au 14 octobre 1976* [Saint-Thierry, 1979], pp. 312–319, and reproduced in Jerry Carfantan, *William, Abbot of Saint Thierry: A colloquium at the Abbey of St Thierry*, CS 94 (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 51–109; the letter of Matthew of Albano and *Responsio abbatum*, ed. Ceglar, are also reproduced in CCCM 89:93–102 and 103–112. This is the edition I have used. See lines 202–04 and 190. Cossé-Durlin, *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise*, 39, suggests that the abbots' actions betray a certain caution about allying themselves too closely to Cluny. Stephen Vanderputten, "A Time of Great Confusion: Second Generation Cluniac Reformers and Their Resistance to the Monastic Centralization in the County of Flanders [c. 1125–1145]," in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 102 (2007), 47–75, here 49, attributes their actions to a desire "to homogenize, and subsequently reorganize, the supervision of Benedictine monasticism on a regional basis."

[24] VP 12.57; PL 185:258: "…quod me quoque ejus dignatio in amicorum numero reputaret.

[25] VP 12.59; PL 185:259: "et jam me nimium fatigasset et attrivisset in longum nimium se protendens aegritudo…" This occurred "perhaps in January 1122," according to. C.J. Holdsworth, "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux," *Cîteaux* 45 (1994), 21–60, here 52[–53, 59].

[26] VP 12.59; PL 185:259: "…misit ad me fratrem suum, virum bonae memoriae Gerardum, mandans me venire ad Claram-Vallem…"

William regarded the invitation as a God-sent respite,[27] but even so the visit surpassed his fondest expectations. The two men, both confined to the infirmary, were able to converse at length, *tota die*, without the usual monastic restrictions.

William grew more and more convinced that Bernard and his monks were experiencing God in a way beyond anything he himself had attained by reading, reason, or observation.[28] Perhaps looking back on the charmed weeks he spent at Clairvaux, William later wrote:

> When I see your children feasting at your table, amid the delights of your love, then, I, who am starving, vehemently love your love in them, and in the depths of my heart I gently embrace those who love you. And I see them rejoicing in the joy which I take from the joys of those who want to but cannot express the measure of their joy… These are the persons who love you. When I see them, and do not find myself among them, I'm sick of life.[29]

Enmeshed in his responsibilities for the spiritual and physical welfare of his monks and the protection of their rights and properties, he found himself increasingly aware of the shortcomings of traditional monastic observances and of his own limitations. His duties conflicted with what he now perceived as the monastic vocation: to seek the "one thing necessary," the face of God,[30] the goal of the monk as he had come through Bernard to understand it.[31]

An intriguing reference in one of Bernard's letters suggests that William at one point, probably around 1125, asked Bernard's permission to enter Clairvaux. At the time Bernard was beginning to exercise caution in accepting Benedictine transfers, as indeed he turned

---

[27] VP 12.59; PL 185:259: "Deus bone, quid mihi boni contulit illa infirmitas, feriae illae, vacatio illa?"

[28] Meditatio 12.22; CCCM 89:76–77; PL 180:246C: "…sapor cibi cujuslibet nulli insinuari potest, nisi gustanti, sic sapor ille nec ratione discuti, nec exponi verbis, nec sensibus potest concipi."

[29] Ibid.; PL 180:246C/247A: "Nam cum in mensa tua filios tuos epulantes video in deliciis amoris tui, jejunus amorem tuum amo in eis vehementer, et ipsos te amantes in medio cordis mei amplector dulciter. Et video eos congaudentes gaudio meo, quod habeo de gaudio eorum, et volentes nec valentes exprimere modum gaudii sui… Hi sunt qui te amant: tales cum video, et inter eos me non invenio, taedet me vivere."

[30] See *De contemplando deo*, ch. 1, in *Guillelmus a Sancto Theodorico, Opera didactia et spiritualia*, ed. Paul Verdeyen, CCCM, 88 (Turnhout, 2003).

[31] Meditatio XI.16; CCCM 89:65: "…cum pastoribus Ecclesiae incumbat pascere gregem Domini in corpore simul et anima, de anima autem maxime Deus requirat dicens, Primum quaerite regnum Dei… Et utinam terminos suos sufficientia cognosceret."

away the "fugitive" monk by whom he sent the letter to William. He was well aware of, and even shared, William's desire, he wrote, but advised that he should instead, "in my opinion, hold on to what you have; stay in the state you are and try to profit those over whom you have pre-eminence[32] and do not shirk having pre-eminence as long as you can be of profit…"[33] William dutifully remained at Saint Thierry until overwhelmed by the conviction that "it is a very serious thing for [a superior] to have pre-eminence when he cannot be of profit."[34] In 1135, William resigned his abbacy, without informing his community or, so far as we know, Bernard, and entered the newly founded Cistercian abbey of Signy in the Ardennes.[35] Writing some ten years[36] after William's death to explain the abrupt ending of his unfinished *Life* of Bernard, Burchard of Balerne, referring to William respectfully as *venerabilis*, attributed his resignation to his long and unremitting "desire for solitude and quiet."[37]

---

[32] A reference to an admonition to the abbot in the Rule of Benedict 64.8: "…sciatque sibi oportere prodesse magis quam praeesse."

[33] Ep. 86.2; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77), 7, p. 224 [abbreviated henceforth as SBO]. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone. "Tene itaque meo consilio quod tenes, mane in quo es, et stude prodesse quibus praees, nec praeesse refuge, dum prodesse potes, quia vae quidem si praees et non prodes, sed vae gravius si, quia praeesse metuis, prodesse refugis." The letter is dated by Jean-Marie Déchanet (*William of St Thierry: The Man and His Work*, CS 10 [Spencer, 1972], p. 32, n. 83) to "before the Apology," i.e., 1125, and by Leclercq in *Recueil 3* (note 11 above), pp. 343–422, to "die 9 sept. 1123 vel 1124" (citing Damien van den Eynde, "Les premiers écrits de Saint Bernard," in Carfantan, *William, Abbot of St Thierry* [note 23 above]).

[34] *Meditativa oratio* XI.15; CCCM 89:64; PL 180:239D: "Sed grauissimum est ei praeesse ubi non potest prodesse."

[35] Although it is widely assumed that William did not go to Clairvaux because Bernard continued to refuse him permission to do so, there is no evidence to support either William's repeated requests or Bernard's subsequent refusals. As I have argued elsewhere, "Making Virtues out of Vexing Habits," in John R. Sommerfeldt and Francis Swietek, eds, *Studiosorum speculum: Essays in Honor of Louis J. Lekai* (Kalamazoo, 1993), pp. 75–94, by 1135 William thought the golden days of Clairvaux were over. Bernard was seldom in residence, and the monks were building a new, grander monastery. William had been drawn to the poverty of the place and the holiness of its abbot, and already at Signy he lamented that people no longer loved poverty but that "In the wilderness, palaces are being erected ("In eremis palatia exstruuntur…"); *Expositio super Cantica canticorum* XLI.189; CCCM 87:126, l. 31; *Expositio super Cantica canticorum* 156; ed. M.-M. Davy, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques* (Paris, 1958), p. 189; PL 180:542.

[36] Writing "no later than 1157" (Bredero, *Between Cult and History* [note 10 above], p. 138).

[37] PL 185:266C: "Praescriptum opus, quod de vita sanctissimi viri Bernardi Claraevallis abbatis conscriptum est a venerabili Guillelmo pridem Sancti-Theoderici abbate,

In view of his close relationship with Bernard, one may ask why William did not transfer to Clairvaux when he left Saint Thierry. Perhaps Bernard still refused permission. Perhaps William realized that Clairvaux in 1135 was not the simple monastery he had so admired some 15 years earlier. In fact, by 1135 Bernard, the *communis vitae seu conversationis ferventissimus aemulator*,[38] was seldom at Clairvaux. And when he returned home, it was not to the shack at the crossroads in which William had first breathed the air of desert monasticism or to the simple monastery where he and Bernard had spent happy hours discussing the spiritual life. Vocations had increased. The community had prospered, and in 1135 the monks of Clairvaux began an ambitious building program and moved up the valley to new, grander quarters.[39] Looking back on the days he visited Bernard in his hut and saw Clairvaux for the first time, William wrote, dare one say, nostalgically:

> That was to see the golden age of Cîteaux, its stout-hearted men, once rich and esteemed in the world, then glorying in the poverty of Christ, planting the Church of God in their own blood, in toil and hardship, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in persecution and criticism, in manifold deprivations laying the groundwork of the Clairvaux which today enjoys sufficiency and peace.[40]

After his eloquent, and persuasive, defence of Innocent II in the Anacletan schism in the early 1130s, Bernard had become a public figure, always on the road in defence of the reform Church. The guidance he had once given the monks, over their heads though it had been in his early abbacy,[41] had been delegated to others. Looking back, William reflected:

---

sed tunc jam monacho Signiacensis coenobii (ad quod desiderio solitudinis et quietis sese contulerat)."

[38] VP 1.4.23; PL 185:240B.

[39] Jean-Michel Musso, "L'abbaye de Clairvaux," *Les monuments historiques* 145 (1986), 14, credits Bernard with undertaking the construction of "la véritable abbaye (Clairvaux II)," which he calls "le prototype—le modèle imposé—des grands établissements de l'ordre cistercien," and again, p. 16, writes of the abbey "telle qu'elle fut conçue par saint Bernard…" He does not, however, provide a source for attributing the new grandeur to Bernard himself.

[40] VP 1.7.35; PL 185:247D: "enim tunc temporis videre Clarae-Vallis aurea saecula, cum viri virtutis, olim divites in saeculo et homorati, tunc in paupertate Christi gloriantes gloriantes, Ecclesiam Dei plantarent in sanguine suo, in labore et aerumna, in fame et siti, in frigore et nuditate, in persecutionibus, et contumeliis, et angustiis multis; praeparantes Clarae-Valli eam quam hodie habet sufficientiam et pacem…praeparantes Clarae-Valli eam quam hodie habet sufficientiam et pacem."

[41] VP 16.28; PL 185:243C: "…homines quos regere, et inter quos conversari veniebat, pene omnes a se absterruit. Si quando namque de spiritualibus et aedificatione

> Back in those days, under abbot Bernard and under his tutelage, this was what the school of spiritual studies was like; this too was the fervour for the Rule's discipline there in that clearest and dearest of valleys. It was all his doing, his arranging, his building up of God's tabernacle on earth…[42]

In the *Vita Prima*, with his eye firmly fixed on Bernard's official canonization as soon as he died, William dutifully portrayed Bernard's absence and the community's prosperity as God's work[43] foretold to Bernard in a vision,[44] but in his *Exposition on the Song of Songs*, written at Signy, he lamented that "in the wilderness (*in heremis*), palaces are being erected."[45]

Bernard and William as Friends

The once-pervasive image of William as Bernard's uncritical admirer has been revised as William studies have multiplied. Their early regard appears now entirely mutual. In describing Bernard's associates in the *Vita Prima*, William made a distinction between acquaintances, companions, and friends,[46] and he considered himself one of Bernard's

---

animarum sermonem ad eos habebat, loquebatur hominibus lingua angelorum, et vix intelligebatur."

[42] VP 1.8.38; PL 185:249C: "Haec ergo fuit in tempore illo sub abbate Bernardo et magistrio ejus in clarissima et charissima valle illa spiritualium schola studiorum…omnia eo faciente et ordinante…" For this turn of phrase, as for several others in these citations, I am indebted to the translation of Martinus Cawley, OCSO, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Early Biographies, Volume 1: by William of St Thierry*, Guadalupe Translations (Lafayette, Ore.: Guadalupe Abbey, n.d.).

[43] VP 1.13.62; PL 185:261. "Jam enim de locis angustioribus vallis illius, domus claustralis habitationis, non sine divinis quibusdam revelationibus translatae in locum planiorem et spatiosum, magnificatae ibi et amplificatae sunt…"

[44] VP 1.7.34; PL 185:247C: "Haud procuul aberat locus densis adhuc spinarum vepriumque frutetis abundans, sed nunc longe mutatus ab illo. Super hunc aliquandiu stabant velut alternantes hori hinc inde dispositi, et Vir sanctus audiebat, et delectabatur. Cujus tamen mysterium visionis non prius agnovit quam, translatis post aliquot annos aedificiis monasterii, eodem loco positum oratorium cerneret, ubi voces illas audisset."

[45] William, Cant. 156; ed. Davy, *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry* (note 35 above), p. 189; trans. M. Columba Hart, *Exposition on the Song of Songs*, Cistercian Fathers, 6 (Kalamazoo, 1970), p. 155, para. 194: "Quis enim hodie profitens paupertatem Christi, non conetur, non satagat, opibus die tanto sinu, aque refertis marsupiis, supergredi etiam divites mundi? Maxima parts mundi possessio religiosorum es. In eremis palatia exstruuntur, in solitudinibus et speluncis aromatice celle fabricantur."

[46] VP 3.10; PL 185:232: "…cognatos, et socios, et amicos…"

friends.[47] In an early letter William addressed the young abbot as *Suus ille quod suus*, to which Bernard replied *suo illi quod suo*.[48] Just as he made no secret of his admiration for Cistercian observances, so he did not hide his esteem for Bernard, the good-looking, keen-witted, well-mannered, elegant, and aristocratic young man who chose the monastic life when he could have succeeded brilliantly at any worldly career.[49] Bernard referred to William as *charissimo suo*[50] and relied on him for theological advice.[51] He assured a mutual acquaintance that, if he could, he would bare his entire soul to him,[52] Their relationship during the decade of the 1120s was a friendship between two men united in common purpose and affection.

Whether the camaraderie between youngish abbots of fairly modest monasteries[53] continued with the same warmth once Bernard became a public figure is not so clear. Nor was their friendship without its ups and downs. More than once Bernard was sharp with William. "You complain you're trying to understand me," he snapped. "You could understand me if you paid attention."[54] When his advice was not heeded, he sulked.[55] William, too, could be peevish. At least once he chided Bernard for not bothering to answer his mail. In reply, Bernard became defensive. Only God can read the human heart, he wrote, citing 1 Corinthians 2:11, and no human being can be sure of another's innermost thoughts and affections. "What you say is perhaps true," he scolded.

---

[47] In describing those attending Bernard on what they thought might be his deathbed, William wrote: "et ego ipse inter caeteros adfui, quod me quoque ejus dignatio in amicorum numero reputaret"; VP 12.57; PL 185:258.

[48] Bernard, Ep. 86.1; SBO 7, p. 223.

[49] VP 1.3.6; PL 185:230B: "…eleganti corpore, grata facie praeeminens, suavissimis ornatus moribus, acri ingenio praeditus, acceptabili pollens eloquio, magnae spei adolescens praedicabatur."

[50] Ep. 327; PL 182:533.

[51] Ep. 327; CCCM 89A:60; SBO 8, p. 263; PL 182:533. See n. 81 below, an expression of Bernard's dependence on William.

[52] Ep. 88 to Oger of Mount Saint Eloi [dated *c.*1125]; SBO 7, p. 234; PL 182:219A: "…cui se videndum animus quoque meus totum, si posset, expanderet?"

[53] Bernard wrote to Oger of Mount Saint Eloi of his lack of practical experience and middling status; Ep. 88.1: "Omitto nunc imperitiam meam, taceo professionis humilitatem, seu humilitatis professionem, nec jam obtendo vel loci, vel nominis mei non dico abjectionem, sed mediocritatem"; SBO 7, p. 232; PL 182:217D–218A.

[54] Ep. 85.4; SBO 7, p. 222; PL 182:206–10: "Quid ergo tu niteris nos apprehendere, et quereris non posse quos jam apprehendisti, si attendisti, et adhuc facere poteris, cum volueris, quales quidem sumus, non quales sperabas…"

[55] VP 1.12.60; PL 185:259D–260A.

> "Loving more, [you] say, I am loved less." These are your very words; I might wish they were not, because I do not know if they are true. But you, if you do know, how do you know? How, I ask, do you prove that we are loved more by you than you by us?… How much I love [you] God knows, I don't.[56]

With amazing candour Bernard also suggested that his capacity for friendship might not match William's. Don't despise my smaller capacity for love, he chided. "Even if we love less than we ought," he wrote, "we still love as much as we can."[57]

The hindsight of history lets us suspect that William had a point. As Bernard became a public figure, he attracted attention and adulation. In the salutations of his letters he was generous with declarations of affection and superlatives, but this was characteristic of his era.[58] And even though he assured a friend, just possibly William, that "true friendship never wears out, else it were not true,"[59] it is unlikely he had the leisure to maintain contact with old friends still concerned with local *remois* matters. As William felt within himself an ever-growing need for solitude,[60] Bernard increasingly moved in the company of popes and princes. Always the extrovert and leader, Bernard had talked 30 friends and relatives into joining him when he made the decision to enter monastic life, and he had taken pleasure, at the age of perhaps 22, in acting as their spiritual father while they experimented with community living at Châtillon before they actually entered Cîteaux.[61] Having then renounced the world and all its glory, by mid-life he was spending nearly all his time travelling the

---

[56] Ep. 85.1–2; SBO 7, pp. 220–221: "Forte verum est quod dicis… 'Ut plus amans,' inqiens, 'minus diligar.' Haec quippe sunt verba tua, quae nollem fuisse tua, quia nescio si sunt vera. Unde, inquam, probasti magis nos a te diligi quam te a nobis?… quatenus autem diligam, tu [Deus] scis, ego nescio."

[57] Ep. 85.4; SBO 7, p. 222: "…tanto minus contemnenda est a te nostra possibilitas,…etsi minus diligimus quam debemus, diligimus tamen quantum valemus…"

[58] William addressed Rupert of Deutz as *Fratri in Christo charissimo* (*De sacramento altaris*, PL 180:341A), perhaps to blunt his criticism, as it is quite likely they had never met. See John Van Engen, "Rupert of Deutz and William of Saint-Thierry," *Revue Bénédictine* 93 (1983), 330–331.

[59] Ep. 506; SBO 8, p. 464, "suo W": "Novum ex antiquo amplector amicum, quia verae amicitiae non veterascunt, aut verae non fuerunt." Bernard was probably borrowing from Jerome (Letter 3): "Amicitia quae desinare poterit vera numquam fuit."

[60] Compare, for example, *De natura et dignitate amoris* 30 (PL 185:396C) with *Meditation* IV (PL 217CD), and both of them with the *Golden Epistle, passim*.

[61] VP 1.13; PL 185:234CD: "Exsultans itaque spiritualis jam pater regeneratorum in Christo fratrum suorum…"

length and breadth of Europe, meeting, dispensing advice to, and corresponding with high and low alike. "Like Augustine," Brian McGuire has written, "Bernard could not be alone."[62] Along with McGuire one may ask, "Was Bernard ever really a friend with anyone, in the sense of sharing part of himself with other persons for the very sake of such sharing, instead of using them for other purposes?"[63]

Bernard and William as Allies in Monastic Reform

Whether William's admiration for the austerity of Cistercian life and for the holiness of Bernard caused him, as abbot, to become an advocate of monastic reform among the black monks of the province of Reims, or whether he drew Bernard into a fray of his own devising is, like so much else, open to debate. In the preface to the *Apologia*, his broadside against the Cluniacs, Bernard asked William to both clearly state his purpose in asking him to write it and fervently to pray that he, Bernard, might be able to do "what you want in the way you want it done."[64] At the same time he was fussing to William about "giving scandal,"[65] he had no hesitation in labelling Cluniac observances plushy and self-indulgent[66] and calling its Grand Prior a ravening wolf in sheep's clothing.[67]

Over the decade of the 1120s, William allied himself with a number of like-minded abbots—several of them originally monks of Saint Nicaise—in trimming back Cluniac elaborations in their houses.[68] He

---

[62] Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community. The Monastic Experience, 350–1250* (Kalamazoo, 1988), p. 292.

[63] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, p. 290.

[64] *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem, praefatiuncula* (not included in SBO 3). See PL 182:897–98: "Si hoc modo vis, aut forte aliter magis expedire vides, manda apertius; et ut valeam quod vis, eo modo quo vis, ora instantius. Scito tamen non modico me hujusmodi scriptitationibus feriri detrimento: quia multum hinc mihi devotionis subtrahitur, dum studium orationis intermittitur, praesertim cum nec usus suppetat dictandi, nec otium."

[65] Ibid.: "quomodo sine scandalo facere queam, non video."

[66] Ep. 1.11; SBO 7, p. 9: "Salus ergo magis in cultu vestium et ciborum est opulentia." Cf. *Apologia*, praef. (897): "Nisi forte, et Ordinem quidem laudabilem, et Ordinis reprehensores reprehensibiles dicam [al. doceam], et nihilominus tamen ipsius superflua reprenendam."

[67] Ep. 1.4; SBO 7, p. 4: "foris quidem apparens in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem lupus rapax…"

[68] See E. Rozanne Elder, "Guillaume de Saint Thierry et le chapitre général bénédictin de 1131," in *Signy l'abbaye, site cistercien enfoui, site de mémoire et Guillaume de*

has been credited with being their leader in braving the wrath of that same Grand Prior of Cluny, Matthew of Albano, by then papal legate to France.[69] Was William in this encouraged, and so used, by Bernard in his own efforts to shame the Black Monks into tightening their discipline and to justify his ire at losing his nephew to Cluny?[70] Was keeping William solidly among the reformer-abbots Bernard's motivation in counselling him to remain at Saint Thierry rather than enter Clairvaux? Or was Bernard himself being manipulated by an opportunistic William to advance his own monastic and theological agenda in the "struggle between the age-old tradition and the renewal under way"?[71] We shall likely never know.

In the *affaire* Peter Abelard, there is no doubt that William took the initiative in embroiling Bernard in the action for which he is most remembered and most criticized.[72] By then at the Cistercian abbey of Signy,[73] William had come across two small books entitled, he reported, *Theologia Petri Abelardi*. Already knowing something of Abelard's theologising from having been present at Abelard's 1121 condemnation at Soissons,[74] he found his curiosity piqued, and he read them. He was not pleased with what he read. In fact, he was "seriously disturbed

---

Saint-Thierry. Actes du Colloque international d'Etudes cisterciennes 9, 10, 11 septembre 1998, Les Vieilles Forges (Ardennes), réunis par Nicole Boucher (Signy L'abbaye, 2000), pp. 487–504. Eadem, "Communities of Reform in the Province of Rheims: The Benedictine 'Chapter General' of 1131," in Mark F. Williams, ed., *The Making of Christian Communities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London, 2005), pp. 117–129, 182–188.

[69] Ceglar, diss., Chapter XI; idem, "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry et son role directeur aux premiers chapitres des abbés bénédictins" (note 23 above), 2:299–309; idem, *William, Abbot* (note 23 above), pp. 34–49 with texts, 51–112.

[70] The subject of Bernard's Letter One to his nephew Robert, written probably four to five years after Robert's defection to Cluny. See SBO 7, p. xx.; PL 182:68–79.

[71] As suggested by Adriaan Bredero in "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry au carrefour des courants monastiques de son temps," *Saint Thierry, une abbaye du VIe au XXe siècle* (note 10 above), pp. 279–297, here 283; translated as "William of Saint Thierry at the Crossroads of the Monastic Currents of His Time," in Carfantan, *William, Abbot of Saint Thierry* (note 23 above), pp. 115, 122–123.

[72] E.g., Michael Clanchy, *Abelard. A Medieval Life* (Oxford,1999), p. 27: "In his prosecution of Abelard, Bernard was spurred on by William of St Thierry and other Cistercian religious revivalists to restate in uncompromising terms fundamental Christian misgivings about the moral value of secular learning."

[73] According to the Chronicle of Signy, William became a monk of Signy, but at Bernard's request was granted abbot-guest status by the Chapter General, allowing him a little greater freedom. "Chronicon de Signy," ed. Françoise Canut, *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Signy* (Thesis, École Nationale des Chartes, 1966), p. 646.

[74] William witnessed a charter, preserved at the BnF Picardie 249, f. 235. See also Clanchy, *Abelard. A Medieval Life*, p. 297, n. 46.

at the unaccustomed novelties" he found in them.[75] Despite protestations that he had once loved the man,[76] he drew up a list of what he considered the dialectician-turned-theologian's errors—13 of them—and dispatched it to the by now—1139 or 1140[77]—highly influential Bernard and, taking no chances, apparently, to the papal legate, Bishop Geoffrey of Chartres. In addition to expressing consternation at their silence, he delivered a ringing exhortation that they bestir themselves to action in defence of orthodoxy.[78] Abelard's books are reputedly everywhere, he warned, even in the papal curia.[79] He followed his letter up with a detailed examination of each objectionable doctrine[80] and insisted again that Bernard and the legate do something to prevent Abelard's ideas from spreading yet further.

Bernard's first response to all this was to remind William that he was, "as you well know, not accustomed to trusting my own judgement, especially in such weighty matters" and to suggest they meet so William could explain to him the 13 charges of heresy he had levelled against the schoolman.[81] Yet even so, after they had met and William had presumably tutored him in Abelard's errors, but before he went off in high gear, Bernard took the precaution of having William's list and what William took to be Abelard's books vetted by Thomas, former abbot of Morigny and at the time a monk of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris.[82]

---

[75] MS Bibliothèque municipale (BM) Charleville 67, ff.72v–73, ed. Jean Leclercq, "Les lettres de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry à Saint Bernard," *Revue Bénédictine* 79 (1969), 375–391, here 377: "Fateor, curiosum me fecit titulus ad legendum… Cum enim graviter turbarer ad insolitas in fide vocum novitiates…"

[76] Formerly listed as a letter of Bernard (326), it is now attributed to William: CCCM 89A:13–15.14; PL 182:532D: "Dilexi et ego eum, et diligere vellem…" On the basis of this phrase, J.-M. Déchanet hypothesized that they had known one another during Abelard's brief sojourn at Laon; "L'amitié d'Abélard et de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 35 (1939), 761–774. No one has subsequently found evidence that William studied with the Masters at Laon.

[77] A. Wilmart, "La série et la date des ouvrages of Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Revue Mabillon* 14 (1924), 157–167.

[78] MS Charleville 67, ff.72v–73, ed. Leclercq, "Les lettres de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry à Saint Bernard" (note 75 above), 377–378.

[79] Ibid.

[80] *Disputatio adversus Petrum Abaelardum. Inter epistolas sancti Bernardi* 326; PL 180:249–366; SBO 8:17–43; CCCM 89A:17–59.

[81] Ep. 327; CCCM 89A:60; SBO 8, p. 263; PL 182:533: "Verum quoniam meo iudicio non satis, ut optime nostis, fidere consuevi, praesertim in tam magnis rebus…cum horum plurima, et paene omnia, hucusque nescierim."

[82] Suspended in 1139 by Henry of Sens for not having attended the Second Lateran Council without being excused, Thomas resigned his abbacy and went to the Parisian

After Abelard had been condemned, for the second time, at Sens[83] and his defenders had pilloried Bernard,[84] the abbot apparently credited or blamed William for getting him involved, for when William later contacted him about the errors of William of Conches, a chip off the Abelardian block in his opinion,[85] Bernard did not comply.[86]

Bernard and William as Writers

In the light of the Abelard exchanges, Joseph de Ghellinck identified William simply as Bernard's theological adviser.[87] Adriaan Bredero has gone yet further by proposing that William tutored Bernard in the subject, which he had not studied with the learned canons of Saint Vorles,[88] and posits that their initial meeting had been quite deliberately arranged for that purpose by Bishop William of Champeaux.[89] If

---

priory, where Bernard apparently thought he had time to critique Abelard's theology. *Chronique de Morigny* 3.2; ed. Mirot, pp. 73–74, cited by Constant Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141): Abelard, Bernard, the Feat of Social Upheaval," *Speculum* 77 (2002), 354.

[83] Abelard was condemned on Sunday, the octave of Pentecost, but the year is less certain. See below, note 111.

[84] See Berengarius scholasticus, *Apologeticus contra beatum Bernardum, Claraevallensem abbatem, et alios qui condemnaverunt Petrum Abaelardum* (PL 178:1857–70) and his letter to the bishop of Mende (PL 178:1871–74), and Robert of Melun, *Pro Petro Abaelardo. Un plaidoyer de Robert de Melun contre saint Bernard* (*Sententiae* 1.3.17–27), ed. R.M. Martin, *Revue de sciences philosophiques et theologiques* 12 (1923), 308–333.

[85] *De erroribus Guillelmi de Conchis*; CCCM 89A:61–71; PL 180:333–40.

[86] Instead, without William's involvement, he took on Gilbert of Poitiers, whose grammatical philosophising was even more remote from his concept of traditional-scriptural theology than were Abelard's unsustainable metaphors, and had the satisfaction of seeing him sanctioned by the Cistercian pope, Eugene III, at the Synod of Reims, in 1148. In hindsight, his reputation suffered. Even the Cistercian Otto of Freising, in chronicling the event, diplomatically and loyally refused to divulge his opinion as to "whether the aforesaid abbot of Clairvaux, as a man, had been deceived in this business by the fragility of human weakness, or whether the bishop [Gilbert], an extremely learned man, had cleverly evaded condemnation by concealing his view." *Gesta Friderici imperatoris* 1.57; Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 29 vols (Hannover, 1826–94) (MGH SS), 20:370.

[87] *Le Mouvement théologique au douzième siècle* (Bruges, 1948; Brussels 1969), p. 568.

[88] Ferruccio Gastaldelli considers "[q]uesta scuola era—dopo quella di Langres—la migliore di tutta la vastissima diocesi [de Langres]…" See Gastaldelli, "I primi vent'anni de San Bernardo. Problemi e interpretazioni," in Gastaldelli, *Studi su san Bernardo e Goffredo di Auerre*, Parte I: San Bernardo di Clairvaux 1 (Florence, 2000), p. 22.

[89] Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 10 above), p. 125.

this is true, William was an excellent teacher. Both Ferruccio Gastaldelli recently and John Sommerfeldt 50 years ago have pointed to compelling evidence of Bernard's mastery of dialectics,[90] and Emero Stiegman has remarked that someone who knew Bernard only through his attack on Abelard—and later on Gilbert of Poitiers—"would hardly suspect that he is himself a theologian whose originality and intellectual daring sometimes surpass theirs."[91]

William's influence on Bernard is evident in Bernard's early works. It was William who encouraged Bernard to write his first treatise on a theological subject, *Grace and Free Choice*, a hotly debated topic of the day.[92] It was William, too, who coaxed Bernard to write the satiric *Apologia* in which he held lax monastic observances up to ridicule.[93] It was, as we have seen, William who pushed Bernard into his confrontation with Abelard. Partly to explain his influence over the ordinarily commanding Bernard, Stanislaus Ceglar advanced the theory that William was Bernard's senior by some ten years and, being more experienced, had a formative influence on him.[94] Both this and Bredero's hypothesis that at the time of their first meeting William was already well known as a writer[95] and that he "was the better educated and more experienced of the two with regard to mystical theology"[96] must, however, be weighed against William's own admission that what most impressed him in Bernard was his ability to communicate his own experience of God and to "teach someone bereft of that experience those things which can be learned only through experience."[97]

---

[90] See Gastaldelli, "I primi vent'anni de San Bernardo" (n. 88 above), pp. 20–27 and pp. 28–33 on Bernard's knowledge of Boethius. John R. Sommerfeldt, "Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters* 46 (1961), 493–501, and idem, "Bernard of Clairvaux and Scholasticism," 48 (1963), 265–277.

[91] Emero Stiegman, "Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, the Victorines," in G.R. Evans, ed., *The Medieval Theologians* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 129–155, here 131.

[92] See his dedication to William: SBO3, p. 165; PL 182:1001A.

[93] *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem*; SBO 3, pp. 81–108; PL 182:896–77: "…me hujusmodi operam dare jubes…me scriptitare jussistis, aut invitus, aut nullatenus acquievi: non quia negligerem quod jubebar…"

[94] Ceglar, diss., Chapter VI, pp. 193–241, sets his birth-date at about 1070 (241).

[95] Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 10 above), p. 124.

[96] Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 10 above), p. 127.

[97] VP 1.159; PL 185:259: "…communicaret sententias intelligentiae et sensus experientiae suae, et multa docere niteretur inexpertum, quae nonnisi experiendo discuntur."

While there is no record of Bernard coaxing William to take pen in hand, William himself attests to Bernard's enormous influence on his life, an influence which shaped his written works. As abbot, William surely wrote out chapter talks for his monks, and may even have collected them for publication as *The Nature and Dignity of Love*.[98] The difference between this early work and those that followed is, however, marked. *De natura et dignitate amoris* is synthetic, logical, insightful, but not introspective. By the time the abbot of Saint Thierry wrote *On Contemplating God*[99] he was expressing both a compelling longing to "go to the mountain of God" and a deepening personal frustration and desolation intensely articulated in some of his *Meditations*.[100] These works seem to mark his intellectual and emotional transition from contented traditional Benedictine to would-be Cistercian, and suggest that he had never, until he and Bernard had talked together in the Claravallian infirmary, attempted reflective writing or penetrating self-scrutiny.

In the *Vita Prima Bernardi*, William wrote of the days he and Bernard spent together:

> Both of us being ill, therefore, we talked together all day about the spiritual medicaments of the soul, about the medicines of the virtues against the lassitudes of the vices. And then, for as long as the period of my infirmity allowed, he held forth to me on the Song of Songs, mostly tropologically, with the mysteries [allegorical sense] of the Scriptures left to the side, because this is what I wanted and this is what I had requested of him. And every day, I set down in writing what I had heard about it, and as much as God granted and memory aided me.[101]

---

[98] *De natura et dignitate amoris*; CCCM 88:177–212; PL 184:379–408; M.-M. Davy, *Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu. De la contemplation de Dieu. De la nature et de la dignité de l'amour* (Paris, 1953). Ceglar (diss., pp. 318–320) also thinks that *De natura et dignitate amoris* had been written as chapter talks and revised.

[99] *De contemplando Deo*; CCCM 88:153–75; PL 184:365–80. Davy, *Deux traités.*

[100] *Meditativae orationes*; CCCM 89:3–80 (Meditations 1–12); PL 180:205–48. M.-M. Davy, *Meditativae orationes* (Paris: Vrin, 1934).

[101] VP 12.59; PL 185:259: "Infirmi ergo ambo, tota die de spirituali physica animae conferebamus, de medicamentis virtutum contra languores vitiorum. Itaque tunc disseruit mihi de Cantico canticorum, quantum tempus illud infirmitatis meae permisit, moraliter tantum, intermissis mysteriis Scripturae illius, quia sic volebam, et sic petieram ab eo. Singulisque diebus quaecunque super hoc audiebam, ne mihi effugerent, scripto alligabam, in quantum mihi Deus donabat, et memoria me juvabat." Some authors have identified William's notes as the *Brevis commentatio*, but that work does not touch on virtues and vices. On the authorship of the *Brevis commentatio* and the various theses concerning it, see Ceglar, diss., Chapter IX, pp. 350–379, where he concludes (p. 379) that "[e]xcept for the first introductory paragraphs, BC is a kind and

In his *Meditations*, begun surely in the infirmary of Clairvaux and supplemented over the years between then and his departure for Signy, he begins by castigating himself for insensitivity of mind and coldness of heart, and painstakingly reviews his life, moving between a conviction of personal unworthiness and a blocked yearning to know God "face to face." He discourses on sin, the vices, and corresponding virtues as he painfully learns to confront his own worst secrets and to see them in the redeeming light of the physical sufferings of Christ. As he attains a measure of self-knowledge, he inserts, as if from nowhere, a meditation on the Song of Songs. The first ten of his 12 Meditations correspond, in fact, to themes which he says he and Bernard discussed in the infirmary. These early meditations may well be his attempts to apply what he had learned after he had, through Bernard's encouragement "seen the gate open into heaven…and heard the voice calling me, 'Come up here.'"[102]

William's other works have been identified with certainty after Dom André Wilmart discovered and in 1924 published William's own listing of them.[103] As researchers began to study them as a body of work, there developed an appreciation for his incisive mind and a reassessment of his heretofore presumed adulatory relationship with Bernard. These works—only one on the list has not been located[104]—are usually grouped according to one of two criteria: 1) those he wrote as a Benedictine and those written when he was a Cistercian; or 2) those composed before and those after he read the theology of Peter Abelard.

---

subtle effort on Bernard's part to help William solve his internal tensions concerning the active and contemplative life."

[102] *Meditatio* VI.1, citing Rev. 4:1; CCCM 89:33; PL 180:222. The final two Meditations (11–12) show William wrestling with the decision to resign his abbacy and so likely date to the 1130s, while a thirteenth, written at Signy, betrays how difficult he found the Cistercian *conversatio* he had so longed to embrace. Meditation 13, the unique manuscript of which is MS Charleville 114, f. 76v, *Excerpta de meditationibus domni Wilhermi*, is not included with the others in the manuscript tradition, and so does not appear in the CCCM critical edition, but was edited by J-M Déchanet, "Meditative oratio nº XIII: Une page encore inédite de Guillaume de St-Thierry," *Collectanea OCR (Collectanea Cisterciensia)* 7.1 (1946), 2–12, text 4–6. The *Oratio domni Willelmi*, MS Paris, Mazarine 776, ff. 45–46, ed. Jacques Hourlier in Sources chrétiennes 61, may well be another meditation that strayed from the collection.

[103] Wilmart, "La série et la date des ouvrages de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," pp. 157–167.

[104] A book of *Sententiae*.

As abbot of Saint Thierry, William wrote five works. In addition to those mentioned above, he penned a treatise *On the Sacrament of the Altar*[105] in response to a "small blemish" in the *De divinis officiis* of the Rhenish Benedictine abbot Rupert of Deutz[106]—a witness to his interest in sacramental theology and in works written outside his own ecclesiastical province. After his retirement to the Cistercian abbey of Signy, he initially devoted himself to the contemplative pursuit of biblical commentary. In addition to two florilegia on the Song of Songs excerpted from the works of Ambrose and Gregory the Great,[107] he produced two scriptural commentaries of his own: a detailed verse-by-verse examination of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans,[108] and another on the Song of Songs.[109] He also penned a study of the physical, mental, and spiritual workings of the human person. *On the Nature of the Body and the Soul* attests both to his wide reading and to his disregard for regulations against monks studying medicine,[110] and hints that he may have been assigned to the monastery infirmary.[111]

It was while he was working on his commentary on the Canticle that William interrupted his contemplative pursuits to alert Bernard to the errors of Abelard. Following Abelard's condemnation at Sens in 1140 or 1141,[112] William penned two theological treatises to refute

---

[105] *De sacramento altaris*; PL 180:341–66; ed Ceglar, CCCM 88.

[106] See Van Engen, "Rupert of Deutz and William of Saint-Thierry," pp. 327–336, and his *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, 1983).

[107] *Commentarius in Cantica canticorum e Scriptis Ambrosii collectus*; PL 180:441, with text at PL 15:1851–1962; and *Excerpta in libris S. Gregorii papae super Cantica canticorum*; PL 180:441–74.

[108] *Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos*; PL 180:547–694; Ed. Poul Verdeyen. CCCM 86. Turnhout, 1989.

[109] *Expositio (altera) super Cantica canticorum*; PL 180:473–546; M.-M. Davy, *Expositio super Cantica canticorum: Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (Paris, 1958); CCCM 87.

[110] The same synod of Reims, which William and Bernard attended in 1131, prohibited monks and canons regular from studying canon law or medicine (Canon 6; Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum, nova et amplissima collectio* [Paris, 1998], 21:457, 459, 461).

[111] *De natura corporis et animae*; CCCM 88:103–46; PL 180:695–726; M. Lemoine, *Guilelmus de sancto Theodorico: De natura corporis et animae* (Paris, 1988). See the excellent background study on William's sources by Bernard McGinn in McGinn, ed., *Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology* (Kalamazoo, 1977).

[112] The condemnation was given on the octave of Pentecost. The year is less certain. The traditional date, 1140, when the octave of Pentecost fell on 2 June, has been upheld by scholars from Elphège Vacandard ("Chronologie abelardienne: La date du concile de Sens: 1140," *Revue des questions historiques* 50 [1891], 235–245) to Giles Constable (*The Letters of Peter the Venerable* [Cambridge, Mass., 1967], 1:318–19) and

points made by Abelard and personal shortcomings in his understanding of what constitutes true *theologia.* He may also have felt a need to work out in his own mind how not a few of his own earlier assumptions differed from those of the condemned and contemned Abelard. *The Enigma of Faith* is a study of intra-trinitarian relationships. *The Mirror of Faith*[113] asserts the primacy of faith, freely chosen, as the prerequisite to theological speculation and spiritual reflection.[114]

As his life drew to its close, the elderly William composed the two works that are considered his masterpieces. *The Golden Epistle*, or *Letter to the Brothers of Mont-Dieu*,[115] provides a mature well-ordered synthesis of his lifelong teaching on the spiritual and monastic life. It was written for the novice master of the Carthusian monastery in the vicinity of Signy to which his own former abbot, Jorannus of Saint Nicaise, had retired. Its rapturous praise of the solitary life has given rise to speculation that, had he lived longer, William might have become a Carthusian. His best known, and final, work, the first book of the *First Life of Bernard*,[116] was left unfinished at his death.[117] In it he presents Bernard as the holy man he truly believed him to be, while he faces squarely personality traits which he knew irritated some, outraged others, and to yet others endeared the then-ubiquitous abbot of Clairvaux.[118]

C. Stephen Jaeger ("Peter Abelard's Silence at the Council of Sens," in his *Scholars and Courtiers: Intellectuals and Society in the Medieval West* [Aldershot, 2002], p. 31). The alternative date, 25 May 1141, was first suggested at the end of the 19th century by S. Martin Deutsch in *Die Synode von Sens 1141 und die Verurteilung Abaelards* (Berlin, 1880) and has recently been advanced by Constant Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)" (note 82 above), and Wim Verbaal, "The Council of Sens Reconsidered: Masters, Monks, or Judges?" *Church History* 74.3 (2005). Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)," p. 347, cites Ferruccio Gastaldelli and Pietro Zerbi in support of the 1141 date. See Constant Mews's article in this volume.

[113] *Aenigma fidei*; CCCM 89A:129–91; PL 180:397–440. M.-M. Davy, *Deux traités sur la foi* (Paris, 1959).

[114] *Speculum fidei*; CCCM 89A:81–127; PL 180:365–98. Davy, *Deux traités sur la foi.*

[115] *Epistola ad fratres de monte Dei*; CCCM 88:225–89; PL 184:307–54. M.-M. Davy, *Un traité de la vie solitaire* (Paris, 1940).

[116] *Vita* [*prima*] *sancti Bernardi*: PL 185:225–68.

[117] To be completed, and revised, by Ernald of Bonneval and Geoffrey of Clairvaux. Sadly for the researcher, the chapter on the condemnation of Abelard was not composed by William. On the value of the VP for historians, see Michael Casey, "Toward a Methodology for the *VP*: Translating the First Life into Biography," *Bernardus Magister* (Kalamazoo and Cîteaux, 1992), pp. 55–70; Adrian Bredero, "Etudes sur la 'Vita Prima' de saint Bernard," *AC* 17 (1961), 218–222; idem, "St Bernard and the Historians," *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 1977), pp. 27–62.

[118] See Elder, "Making Virtues" (note 35 above).

The Spirituality of William and Bernard

Early in their relationship, Bernard assured William that they shared a common vocabulary and that this created a bond between them.[119] Their spiritualities are very similar. They drew from common scriptural and patristic sources, spoke in the idiom of the 12th-century "renaissance," and their goal was identical: the vision of God. Both believed unequivocally that love is the innate spiritual faculty which makes the human person capable of being re-formed from self-centredness, conformed to the image of God and in the life to come transformed by becoming the very love of God, who is love.[120]

In his earliest work William made a distinction between natural human love (*amor*) and divine love (*caritas*), which through the Holy Spirit is operative in human beings. In his late *Golden Epistle*, he continued this distinction, defining *amor* as a strong will for God; *dilectio* as cleaving to or being conjoined with, God, and *caritas* as fruition, enjoyment.[121] Each he viewed as a stage in the progressive upward spiralling development of the human soul from unlikeness to likeness to God which begins with a human decision freely and voluntarily made.[122] Bernard, when asked how to love God, famously replied, without measure.[123] He does not seem to have distinguished between *amor, dilectio*, and *caritas*, yet he relied almost entirely on the vocabulary of love and desire (*desiderium*) in describing the human experience of God.[124] Bernard's pedagogy of love consists in four stages: love of oneself for one's own sake, of God for one's own benefit, of God for God's sake, and finally of God for God's sake alone.[125]

---

[119] Ep. 86.1; SBO 7, p. 223: "…cum quo est mihi commune verbum, animum non distare."

[120] 1 Jn. 4:8: "Deus caritas est."

[121] *Epistola aurea* 2.257; CCCM 281; PL184:348.

[122] *Epistola aurea* 2.257: "Magna enim uoluntas ad Deum, amor est; dilectio, adhaesio siue coniunctio; caritas, fruitio." On the will, see *Epistola aurea* 2.228 (CCCM 99:275): "Bona enim uoluntas origo est in animo omnium bonorum et omnium mater uirtutum."

[123] *De diligendo Deo*, 1; SBO 3, p. 119; PL 182:974D: "Causa diligendi Deum, Deus est; modus, sine modo diligere."

[124] On Bernard's spirituality of love, see McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism* (note 5 above), 193–224.

[125] *De diligendo Deo* 8.23–10.29; SBO 3, pp. 138–143. See the commentary of Emero Stiegman, in *Bernard of Clairvaux: On Loving God* (Kalamazoo, 1995).

William, in his description of the process of learning to love God, emphasizes the pivotal role played by human reason in allowing the human person to pass beyond what is sensory to what is spiritual. In his anthropology, reason is consistently the distinctively human faculty without which growth from self-love to love of God, from blindness to perception, is impossible. While Bernard speaks of reason,[126] as must everyone who knew Augustine's trinitarian impress of reason, memory, and will,[127] love is, in his opinion, not subject to rational considerations.[128] For William reason was absolutely essential. In his early *The Nature and Dignity of Love*, he spoke almost in passing of reason and love as being two eyes by which God is seen, asserting that each without the other is incapable of the full vision of God.[129] In his later corrective to Abelard, *The Mirror of Faith*, he refers to reason as "the eye of the mind…the mind's sense of sight."[130] And in both his commentary on the Song of Songs and his letter to the Carthusians, he makes rationality the essential ontological stage of transition from fallen, self-centred man (*homo animalis*) to redeemed, God-focussed man (*homo spiritualis*), insisting that human beings must, if they can, exercise this distinguishing gift or else slip away from God.[131] This regal faculty "discriminates, receives and gathers information, and disposes" what it learns from the senses.[132] Reason allows the human mind to withdraw from sensory images, which tie it to created matter, by letting it conceive of reality without images, abstractly, as we would say, and so to pass to a yet more profound understanding which transcends not only senses but even rationality, an apprehension of the Truth which surpasses all understanding. Only through the discernment of reason

---

[126] E,g, *De conversione ad clericos* 6.11; PL 182:841.

[127] Augustine, *De Trinitate* 10.11.17 (*memoria, intelligentia, voluntas*); 15.22.42 (*memoria*, *intellectus*, *amor*); *Sololoquia* 12.15.24 (*[intellectus] scientia*, *voluntas*); 14.12.115 (*memoria dei, intelligentia dei, amor dei*). For this summary I am indebted to F. Vanfletern, "Thematic Reflections of the *De Trinitate*," a paper given at the International Medieval Studies Congress at Kalamazoo in 1978.

[128] Sermon 9.2 on the Song of Songs; SBO 1, p. 3; PL 183:815: "…sed praeceps amor…nec rationi subicitur."

[129] *De natura et dignitate*, [8.]21; CCCM 88:193; PL 184:393A: "Sunt autem duo oculi in hoc uisi ad lumen quod Deus est…amor et ratio."

[130] *Speculum fidei* 2; PL 180:365–66C. Cf. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 2.6.13; PL 32:1248.

[131] *Epistola ad fratres*, Book two, *passim*. CCCM 88:268ff.

[132] *De natura animae*, 62; CCCM 8:1125; PL 180:711C: "Quasi enim regina sedens ratio in media ciuitatis suae arce…discernit et suscipit, et collocat…discernens…distribuens."

can the human will make the crucial choice to return to God rather than surrender to the downward pull of materiality and so succumb to the dehumanisation initiated at the fall; and in William's Augustinian vocabulary, it is the will, intensified, which becomes love.[133]

For all their agreement on the goal, the emphases of two monks differ. "At the heart of Bernard's thought," writes Emero Stiegman, "is Christology."

> The emphasis this author places on the humanity of Christ reflects the monastic tradition of *lectio divina*, a private meditative reading of Scripture which draws a reader imaginatively into the event; it is a new emphasis in theological literature.[134]

At the heart of William's thought is the Holy Spirit.[135] When he speaks of the experience of God, he speaks of "unity of Spirit,"[136] explaining:

> It is called unity of spirit not only because the Holy Spirit brings it about or inclines the human spirit to it, but because it is the Holy Spirit himself, the God who is charity, for He is the love of Father and Son, their unity and gentleness, their good and kiss, their embrace and whatever else is common to both… for in an inexpressible and inconceivable way the man of God is found worthy to become not God, but what God is, that is to say, man becomes by grace what God is by nature.[137]

"The ascent to God for William," observes Bernard McGinn, "might be characterized as proceeding *per Filium, in Spiritu, ad Trinitatem*."[138]

William articulated a carefully thought-out Christology,[139] and Bernard referred often to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Both found

---

[133] See David N. Bell, *Image and Likeness. The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint-Thierry* (Kalamazoo, 1984).

[134] Stiegman, "Bernard" (note 91 above), p. 132.

[135] See the pioneering study of Odo Brooke, gathered together in *Studies in Monastic Theology* (Kalamazoo, 1980), which appeared originally as articles in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* (1961).

[136] The Golden Epistle, 2.262: "…ut non iam similitudo, sed unitas spiritus nominetur…."

[137] The Golden Epistle, 2.263; CCCM 88:282: "Dicitur autem haec unitas spiritus, non tantum quia efficit eam, uel afficit ei spiritum hominis Spiritus sanctus, sed quia ipsa ipse est Spiritus sanctus, Deus cartias; cum qui est amor Patric et Filii, et unitas et suauitas, et bonum et osculum, et amplexus et quicquid commune potest esse amorum, in summa illa unitate ueritatis et in ueritate unitatis…cum mono ineffabili et incogitabili, fieri meretur homo Dei, non Deus, sed tamen quod Deus est: homo ex gratia quod deus est ex natura."

[138] *The Growth of Mysticism*, p. 269.

[139] Elder, "The Christology of William of St Thierry," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 58 (1991), 79–112, and eadem, "Christologie de Guillaume de

Abelard's theology deficient in these very areas. Their differences in expressing their experience highlight the uniqueness of their personalities. Whatever the toll on his precarious health, Bernard gives every indication of having been energized by his involvement in ecclesiastical affairs. William found administrative responsibilities a distraction. Bernard had a poetic and gregarious nature; he loved words and enjoyed the company of like-minded persons. William had a speculative and single-minded nature; he sought solitude and used words carefully; and, as his criticism of Abelard shows, he regards them as verbal symbols of a reality beyond verbal expression. When Bernard told his monks of his own experience of God, he spoke of the visit of the Word,[140] and in describing the union of the soul with God his favourite metaphor was the conjoining of Bride and Bridegroom. William longed to see the face of the triune God in unity of Spirit. Words, William thought, can,

> if used carefully, draw the mind to an inexpressible Reality. But words summon up images. Words, carelessly or over-confidently used, can become obstacles. "We toss words around," William wrote. "We are caught up in words and by them we are held back from what cannot be expressed in words. And yet, without words, nothing can be said about it… [Yet] no word expresses God as he is."[141]

In his zeal to know God, William appropriated, used and then went beyond not only words but also sensory information, human affection, and rational insight. Blocked in his aspiration to experience God, for example, he learned, apparently from Bernard, to meditate affectively on the sufferings of Christ.[142] For Bernard, reflection on the human Christ nourished devotion; for William, graphic meditations were a necessary but temporary means to greater understanding and deeper love. As sensory experience opens to rational perception, William thought, the senses must be abandoned. As reason develops, it too must be left behind. Otherwise the human person can never pass beyond concept to Reality. All images, all affections, all concepts, all

---

Saint-Thierry et vie spirituelle," in *Signy l'abbaye, site cistercien enfoui, site de mémoire et Guillaume de Saint-Thierry* (note 68 above), pp. 575–587.

[140] Sermon 74.5–7 on the Song of Songs. SBO 2, pp. 243–244; PL 183:1141–42.

[141] *Speculum fidei* 115–16 (Sources chrétiennes [SC], nr. 89A, p. 125): "Nos uero uerba jactamus, verbis inuoluimur, et impedimur ab eo quod nullis uerbis exprimi potest, et tamen non nisi uerbis de eo aliquid dici potest… Non tamen sicut est exprimit…"

[142] See Meditation Five.

words, even the Word revealed in Scripture, were for William vehicles given to humankind to enable them to pass from the blindness of fallen nature to a recognition of the inexpressible Godhead who can be known only through transformed love by participation in the triune God who is love.[143]

[143] *Speculum fidei* 118 ff. (SC 89A.126–27).

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX AND PETER ABELARD

Constant J. Mews

Few relationships in the 12th century have been as contentious as that between Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard. The wide interest in Bernard's letters during the medieval period ensured that his epistolary treatise on Abelard's errors (Letter 190), addressed to Pope Innocent II, as well as his numerous letters to cardinals of the curia, warning of Abelard's influence in the aftermath of the Council of Sens, held on 25 May 1141, were never forgotten.[1] In the modern period, Bernard's hostility towards Abelard has sometimes been interpreted as evidence of the repressive force of religion against the cause of reason or, by his defenders, as supporting a mystical view of religion against one that was more analytic. Certainly there is no doubting Bernard's capacity for turning vivid prose to devastating effect:

> We have in France a former teacher turned new theologist, who from his earliest youth has dabbled in the art of dialectic and now raves about the Holy Scriptures. He tries to raise teachings, once condemned and silenced, both his own and others, and has added new ones besides. He who deems to know everything in heaven above and on earth below apart from "I do not know," lifts his face to heaven and gazes on the depths of God, bringing back to us words that cannot be spoken, which is not lawful for a man to speak. While he is ready to supply a reason for

[1] The key letters of Bernard relating to the confrontation with Abelard are Epp. 187–96, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 8, pp. 9–52 and Epp. 330–38 (SBO 8, pp. 266–278). These letters (apart from Ep. 190, the treatise of Bernard, unfortunately untranslated) are translated with a different numbering by Bruno Scott James, *The Letters of Bernard of Clairvaux* (New York, 1980). On the arguments in favour of assigning the Council of Sens to the Octave of Pentecost of 1141 (25 May), rather than 1140 (2 June), see Constant J. Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141): Abelard, Bernard, and the Fear of Social Upheaval," *Speculum* 77 (2002), 342–382, with a detailed bibliography of earlier studies on p. 343, n. 2. Subsequent studies worth mentioning include: John R. Sommerfeldt, *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (New York, 2004); Pietro Zerbi, *"Philosophi" e "logici": un ventennio di incontri e scontri: Soissons, Sens, Cluny, 1121–1141* (Milan, 2002). Wim Verbaal, author of *Een middeleeuws drama: het conflict tussen scholing en vorming bij Abaelardus en Bernardus* (Kampen, 2002), offers an important perspective on the evolution of judicial procedure at Sens, in "The Council of Sens Reconsidered: Masters, Monks, or Judges?" *Church History*, 74 (2005), 460–493.

> everything, even those which are beyond reason, yet he presumes against reason and against faith.[2]

This passage succinctly conveys Bernard's dismissal of Abelard as a *theologus*, a term that Bernard only uses within his writing in a negative sense, to refer to someone who claimed a false knowledge about the truths of Scripture. Abelard was dangerous because of the extent of his intellectual ambition, his emphasis on reason, which he thought bordered on the irrational and certainly challenged the wisdom of faith. Bernard offers a sharp rhetorical distinction between a scholastically trained intellectual, more interested in questioning statements of faith than in the spiritual life itself, and the demands of faith.

In the nuanced analysis of Jean Leclercq, the antagonism between Bernard and Abelard was the fruit of what he identified as two distinct systems of schooling in the medieval world, one clerical, defined by the use of authorities, questions, and logical argument, the other monastic and derived from meditating on the Bible, but with an interior psychological dimension.[3] Yet there are difficulties with this analysis, not least its failure to deal with the intellectual culture of canons regular, who sought to combine a claustral tradition with the analysis of the schools. It is also difficult to say that Bernard and Abelard typified two distinct strands of theology, when many different modes of thought and pedagogy emerged during the medieval period, both within and outside of monasticism. Most scholastic texts from the 12th century (including the writings of Peter Abelard) survive within monastic libraries. The confrontation between Bernard and Abelard certainly testifies to conflict between competing forces within 12th-century France, but it may be inadequate to describe one as monastic, the other as scho-

---

[2] Ep. 190.1 (SBO 8, pp. 17–18): "Habemus in Francia novum de veteri magistro theologum, qui ab ineunte aetate sua in arte dialectica lusit, et nunc in Scripturis sanctis insanit. Olim damnata et sopita dogmata, tam sua videlicet quam aliena, suscitare conatur, insuper et nova addit. Qui dum omnium quae sunt in caelo sursum et, quae in terra deorsum, nihil, praeter solum 'Nescio,' nescire dignatur, ponit in caelum os suum et scrutatur alta Dei, rediens que ad nos refert verba ineffabilia, quae non licet homini loqui; et dum paratus est de omnibus reddere rationem, etiam quae sunt supra rationem, et contra rationem praesumit, et contra fidem. Quid enim magis contra rationem quam ratione rationem conari transcendere?"

[3] Jean Leclercq formulated the influential hypothesis that there were two kinds of schools in the medieval period, monastic and clerical, in *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrahi, 3rd edn (New York, 1982), pp. 191–202.

lastic. Both men shared a common desire to renew Christian faith in terms relevant to their own understanding of human reason and experience. Their relationship deserves to be understood as emerging from a broader ferment in 12th-century society about the direction of educational and religious reform. Their conflict was shaped by broader political tensions within Latin Christendom and the kingdom of France in particular, in the first half of the 12th century.

William of Champeaux, Bernard, and Abelard

The key figure for understanding the enduring tension between Bernard and Abelard, political as much as intellectual and spiritual, was William of Champeaux. Bernard only got to know William during the time that he was bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne (now Châlons-en-Champagne), from late July 1113 until his death, 18 January 1122.[4] Abelard's relationship with William was quite different. Abelard, at least 11 years older than Bernard, first studied under William in around 1100, at the cathedral school of Notre-Dame in Paris.[5] Before coming to Paris, he had spent several years (*c.*1093/94–1099) studying under Roscelin of Compiègne, at Loches in the Loire valley, perhaps

[4] André Duchesne reported a document in his 1616 annotations to the *Historia Calamitatum*, repr. J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus, series latina* (PL), 22 vols (Paris, 1844–64), 178:122D, recording that William was bishop for seven years and six months.

[5] Abelard died 21 April 1142, at the age of 63, according to an Old French calendar of the Paraclete, mentioned by Duchesne (PL 178:176CD). Verbaal, *Een middeleeuws drama* (note 1 above), follows a suggestion made by John F. Benton that, although most early chronicles date Abelard's death to 1142, there are a few who give it as 1143; see Benton, "Philology's Search for Abelard in the Metamorphosis Goliae," originally published in *Speculum* 50 (1975), 199–217, repr. in *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*, ed. Thomas Bisson (London, 1991), pp. 455–473, esp. pp. 472–473. Abelard was still alive when this satirical poem was written, but had gone into retreat, if Heloise is understood to be philology pursuing Abelard as eloquence, according to the *Metamorphosis Goliae*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM) (Turnhout, 1966–), 171:805–15 ("Nupta querit ubi sit suus Palatinus, cuius totis extitit spiritus divinus,/ querit cur se subtrahat quasi peregrinus/ quem ad sua ubera foverat et sinus"). It also depends on reading "Et hic presul presulum stat Pictaviensis" as about Gilbert of Poitiers and dating his becoming bishop to 1142, not 1141, as Benton noted (pp. 472–473). If the Council was held in May 1141, the poem is more likely to present a vision of Paris in late 1141/early 1142, when all these masters, apart from Abelard, were still in Paris, but written up when it was known that Gilbert was *Pictaviensis*.

also at Tours, where Roscelin became a canon. Although this was not a detail he mentioned in the *Historia Calamitatum*, this early study, under a teacher himself accused of heresy by Saint Anselm at Soissons in 1090/92, helped suggest to Bernard that Abelard belonged to a new breed of student, enticed by the opportunities offered by schools attached to non-monastic churches, places that offered opportunities for advancement rather than spiritual direction.[6]

The hostility that Bernard manifested towards Abelard in the years 1140/41 cannot be disassociated from political tensions first manifest in the early 12th century with the rise to influence of Abelard's patron, Stephen de Garlande (d. *c.*1147), archdeacon of Paris from around 1095 and royal chancellor for much of the reign of Louis VI (1108–37). It was through Stephen's help that Abelard set up his own school at Melun and then Corbeil (probably *c.*1104–07), before retreating to his home region on the border of Brittany and Anjou, "to recover from overwork."[7] Abelard's decision to start teaching outside of Paris coincided with the rise to influence of a new bishop, Galo (previously successor to Ivo of Chartres as provost of Saint Quentin, Beauvais), and the promotion of William of Champeaux, sometime between 1103 and 1107, from teacher at the cathedral school to a canon of the cathedral chapter and one of its three archdeacons. As archdeacon in Paris, not replaced until 1112, William became increasingly involved in the cause of implementing ecclesiastical reform at a moment that Stephen de Garlande's influence was in temporary abeyance. This was the cause to which Bernard was committed when he and thirty-odd companions decided to join a new monastic community at Cîteaux in 1112.

---

[6] On Roscelin, see the papers assembled in Constant J. Mews, *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard*, Variorum Collected Studies Series 730 (Aldershot, 2002).

[7] The key influence of Stephen of Garlande in the evolution of Abelard's career was documented by Robert-Henri Bautier, "Paris au temps d'Abélard," in *Abélard en son temps*, ed. Jean Jolivet (Paris, 1981), pp. 21–77. Bautier assumed, however, that William of Champeaux left Notre-Dame for Saint Victor in 1108, suggesting that Abelard only studied under William between 1100 and 1102, before establishing a school at Melun and then Corbeil between 1102–04 and spending the period 1105–08 in exile. I argue that William's departure from the cathedral was in Easter 1111 and that Abelard moved to Melun in around 1104 but spent the period 1107–11 away from Paris, before returning to challenge William in a public debate; see Constant J. Mews, "The Foundation of St Victor (Easter 1111?) and the Chronology of Abelard's Early Career," in Irène Rosier-Catach, ed., *Arts du langage et théologie aux confins des XIe et XIIe siècle* (Turnhout, 2011).

Although William's decision to resign from the cathedral and to establish a community of canons regular, with its own public school, at the disused chapel of Saint Victor has traditionally been dated to the beginning of the reign of Louis VI, the evidence of a letter from a German student suggests he did so only at Easter 1111.[8] Certainly by 1110, Louis VI had invited Stephen of Garlande to become dean of Sainte Geneviève on the left bank of Paris, so renovating an abbey of secular canons with the thought of building it up as an educational centre, outside the cathedral chapter–while still maintaining his position as one of the three archdeacons of Paris. William of Champeaux was then given approval to resign from the cathedral and establish a community of regular canons, dedicated to a more ascetic way of life, at Saint Victor, but maintaining a public school there. Louis VI may have resolved on this strategy of allowing separate communities to develop at Sainte Geneviève and Saint Victor as a way of diffusing tensions within the cathedral chapter. When Abelard observed that William was continuing to teach in the *urbs*, he was recognizing that Paris was now spilling beyond the limits of the *civitas* or Ile-de-la-cité. After successfully interrupting William's comments on universals within lectures on rhetoric, Abelard established himself as a teacher at Sainte Geneviève, undoubtedly at the invitation of its dean, Stephen de Garlande. Because of rumours about the sincerity of his conversion, and suspicion that he had not really left the Ile-de-la-cité (perhaps because he did not immediately resign his position as archdeacon), William then moved his fledgling community away from the *monasterium* he had established, to a *villa* "far from the *urbs*."[9] This is very

[8] The letter can be dated from the strictly chronological sequence of letters preserved in the *Udalrici Codex, Monumenta Bambergensia*, ed. Philipp Jaffé, *Bibliotheca rerum germanicarum*, 5 (Berlin, 1869), no. 160, p. 286. The student's letter is translated and annotated in Manegold of Lautenbach, *Liber contra Wolfelmum*, trans. Robert Ziomkowski (Leuven, 2002), pp. 121–122. As I explain elsewhere (note 7 above), the 1108 date for the foundation of Saint Victor derives from scholars repeating an unquestioned assumption made at Saint Victor in the 17th century, that the abbey was founded at the beginning of the reign of Louis VI (1108–37). Unfortunately, the letter was not used by Bautier in his important study of the origins of Saint Victor, "Les origines et les premiers développements de l'abbaye Saint Victor de Paris," in *L'Abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au Moyen Age: Communications présentées au XIIIe Colloque d'Humanisme médiéval de Paris (1986–1988)*, ed. Jean Longère, Bibliotheca Victorina 1 (Paris, 1991), pp. 23–52.

[9] Abelard, *Historia Calamitatum*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris, 1978), p. 65: "Nec tamen hic sue conversionis habitus aut ab urbe Parisius aut a consueto philosophie studio revocavit, sed in ipso quoque monasterio ad quod se causa religionis contulerat

likely to be Puiseaux, located roughly midway between the royal palaces at Orleans and Paris, an abbey that Louis VI officially endowed in 1112, with the assent of all the bishops of France, as the centre of a richly endowed order of canons regular. Nothing more came of this venture, except that its foundation charter was reproduced in almost identical fashion in a royal charter issued at Châlons in July 1113, establishing Saint Victor as the mother house of this new order, while Puiseaux became one of its priories.[10] William was apparently persuaded, by hearing of Abelard's growing influence at Sainte Geneviève, to return his community to their former monastery, namely Saint Victor and resume teaching in Paris. The minor figure, with a modest reputation in teaching grammar, whom William had installed at the cathedral school, replacing his original appointee, subsequently left Paris to become a monk. This minor figure is very likely to be Goswin, who once challenged Abelard in dispute at Sainte Geneviève but subsequently became a monk at Anchin, near his native Douai, in around 1113.[11] The origins of the political tensions that would divide Bernard and Abelard three decades later go back to the stormy beginnings of the tension between rival religious communities, each struggling to

---

statim more solito publicas exercuit scolas." This passage is interpreted differently by Charles de Miramon, "Quatre notes biographiques sur Guillaume de Champeaux," in *Arts du langage*, ed. Rosier-Catach (note 7 above). He argues that by *urbs*, Abelard is referring to the *cité* where William originally established a monastery, and that William only subsequently moved to Saint Victor. Yet Abelard's comment that William subsequently went far from the *urbs* but returned his community to their former monastery implies that he is using *urbs* to refer to Paris as now embracing the left bank, while reserving *civitas* to refer to the *cité*. *Historia Calamitatum*, ed. Monfrin, p. 67: "Quo auido magister noster statim ad urbem impudenter rediens scolas quas tunc habere poterat et conventiculum fratrum ad pristinum reduxit monasterium, quasi militem suum quem dimiserat ab obsidione nostra liberaturus."

[10] The foundation charters of Puiseaux and Saint Victor are edited by Jean Dufour, *Recueil des Actes de Louis VI roi de France (1108–1137)*, 4 vols (Paris 1992–94), 1:173–82. Both foundations are studied, and the case is made that William retreated to Puiseaux; see Julian Führer, *König Ludwig VI. von Frankreich und die Kanonreform* (Frankfurt, 2008), pp. 137–147. The possibility is even stronger if William initially moved to Saint Victor in 1111, not 1108 as traditionally thought.

[11] See Mews, "The Foundation of St Victor (Easter 1111?)" (note 7 above). William's initial successor at the cathedral school may have been Jocelyn of Vierzy, a former student of William who subsequently a teacher and archdeacon at Bourges and then bishop of Soissons 1126/27–52. Jocelyn's warning to Goswin that he should not challenge Abelard is reported in the detailed recollections of Goswin's early life preserved in the *Vita Goswini*, ed. M. Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 14 (Paris, 1806), pp. 442–448.

work out best how it could resolve the challenge of combining study and teaching with service to the Church.

Once William of Champeaux became bishop of Châlons, his sympathies turned away from the canons regular, toward the monasticism of Cîteaux. According to a letter of Bernard from around 1120, William of Champeaux had encouraged certain canons regular, perhaps from Amiens, to defect to a monastic way of life, creating tension in his relationship with their original community.[12] This change in William's sympathies may go back to the moment, reported by William of Saint Thierry, of his first meeting with Bernard at Châlons. Although William implies that this friendship came about only after Bernard was obliged to seek out a bishop to be ordained abbot of Clairvaux (August 1115) because of an episcopal vacancy in the see of Langres, this was not strictly accurate.[13] As a monk at Cîteaux, Bernard may have sought out William of Champeaux precisely because he was strongly committed to the cause of ecclesiastical reform. Between 1113 and 1121, William became a close adviser to Cono, cardinal bishop of Palestrina, an Augustinian canon (one of the founders of Arrouaise) who served as papal legate throughout France and Germany and was actively engaged in promoting the cause of new religious foundations.[14] Clairvaux and Morimond would be officially established at the same time, quite possibly to serve as parallel seeds for monastic reform in both France and in the Holy Roman Empire. As Casey has argued, the evidence relating to the parallel foundations of Clairvaux and Morimond supports the idea that soon after the foundation of La Ferté (1113), Pontigny (1114), Clairvaux and Morimond (1115), and of Trois-Fontaines in the diocese of Châlons as the first daughter house of Clairvaux, there was emerging the notion of a community of abbeys held together by a *carta caritatis*.[15] Just as William of Champeaux facilitated the foundation of

[12] Ep. 3 (SBO 8, pp. 23–24).

[13] Michael Casey, "Bernard and the Crisis at Morimond. Did the Order Exist in 1124?" *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* (CSQ) 38 (2003), 119–175.

[14] William is described as a close aide to Cono in *La Chronique de Morigny*, ed. Leon Mirot (Paris, 1909), p. 42: "Conon, Prenestinus episcopus et Apostolice Sedis legatus…habens secum velut auxiliatorem magnum, Willelmum Catalaunensem." See also *Chronique de Morigny*, p. 33: "Cono, Prenestinus episcopus, totius Francie ac Teotonie, Alamannie ac Saxonie legatus." See *A Translation of the Chronicle of the Abbey of Morigny, France, c. 1100–1150*, trans. Richard Cusimano (Lewiston, 2003).

[15] Casey's analysis of key texts relating to Morimond (note 11 above) responds to the argument put forward by Constance Berman, that the notion of a Cistercian *ordo* was only invented after the death of Saint Bernard; see Berman, *The Cistercian*

Saint Victor, so he helped Bernard establish his community at Clairvaux, as well as a daughter house in his own diocese.

According to William of Saint Thierry, Bernard became a close intimate of his episcopal mentor, frequently spending time with the bishop at Châlons: "What more? From that day and from that hour, they became one heart and one soul in the Lord, so much that often one would consider the other as henceforward his guest, and the house of the bishop of Châlons was his own, while Clairvaux became not only the house of the bishop, but through him [Bernard], the whole city of Châlons."[16] William's influence was crucial in leading others to admire Bernard. Sometime before 1120, William of Champeaux was so concerned by a serious illness that afflicted Bernard, perhaps through excessive self-mortification, that he went to an early general chapter of the abbots of the order of Cîteaux to ask that Bernard be placed under obedience to himself, and forced to stay in a house outside the cloister at Clairvaux, so that he could recover his health.[17] William of Saint Thierry, elected abbot of the Benedictine community at Saint Nicasius, Reims, in 1119, first started to visit Clairvaux and befriend

---

Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe (Philadelphia, 2000). Chrysogonus Waddell edits the key early documents (*Exordium Cistercii*, *Summa cartae caritatis cum capitulis*) in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Cîteaux, 1999), pp. 177–191, arguing (pp. 145–156) against the widely held view that the *Exordium Cistercii* was drawn up at Clairvaux around 1124–25 and suggesting it was drawn up at Cîteaux only after the death of Stephen Harding in 1134. This view presupposes that Cîteaux controlled the evolution of the Order. The possibility that a record of the Order's origins was generated at Clairvaux, under the influence of Bernard, should not be dismissed.

[16] *Vita prima* [abbreviated henceforth as VP] 1.7; PL 185:245C–246A: "Quid multa? Ex illa die et ex illa hora facti sunt cor unum et anima una in Domino, in tantum ut saepe alter alterum hospitem deinceps haberet, et propria esset domus Episcopi Clara-Vallis; Clarae-Vallensium vero efficeretur non sola domus Episcopi, sed et per ipsum tota civitas Catalaunensis."

[17] VP 1.7; PL 185:246A–246C: "profectus Episcopus ad capitulum Cisterciense, ibi coram pauculis abbatibus qui convenerant, pontificali humilitate et sacerdotali charitate, toto corpore in terram prostratus, petiit et obtinuit ut tantum anno uno in obedientiam sibi traderetur. Quid enim tantae humilitati in tanta posset auctoritate negari? Reversus itaque Claram-Vallem, extra claustra et terminos monasterii domunculam unam ei fieri praecepit: ordinans et mandans in cibo vel potu, sive in aliquo ejusmodi circa eum nullam ibi teneri Ordinis districtionem; nullam de tota cura domus ad eum referri sollicitudinem, sed sini [*al.* sibi] eum vivere secundum modum ab eo praestitutum." This passage gives crucial insight into the juridical dependence of Clairvaux on the chapter (not yet called a General Chapter) at Cîteaux, but perhaps (if only a few abbots were present) not yet as a normative practice. By 1119, there would have been 20 Cistercian abbots; Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts* (note 15 above), p. 148.

Bernard when he was living in a house separate from the cloister. Looking back on those early years at Clairvaux as a golden age, William of Saint Thierry recalled that he was seized with such affection for Bernard that he did not want to leave his presence. The monks in that community imitated the ascetics of the Egyptian desert. God could be recognized in the simplicity of their way of life. Bernard encouraged an intensity of awareness of divine love, in particular through shared reading of the Song of Songs, a text that both William of Saint Thierry and Bernard were beginning to discover through the commentary of Origen, as translated by Rufinus. In a treatise about the nature of love written in about these years, William of Saint Thierry was very aware of the enticing lure of secular writing (above all by Ovid) about love. Although undoubtedly familiar with the theological traditions of the school of Laon, having studied at the cathedral school of Reims before becoming a monk, he became increasingly fascinated by the challenge of presenting a theological vision that developed the notion that the soul had to grow from *amor* to full *caritas*.[18] William of Saint Thierry, older than Bernard perhaps by 20 years, was more interested in speculative theology than the abbot of Clairvaux. Between 1115 and the death of William of Champeaux in January 1122, William of Saint Thierry and Bernard became particularly interested in the Song of Songs, as interpreted by Origen and other Fathers of the Church. It provided a more experiential text for developing a theological vision than the detailed glosses on Scripture and the *sententie* developed by Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux.

While William of Champeaux certainly delivered theological *sententie*, often more speculative in character than those of Anselm of Laon, he also composed an abbreviation of the *Moralia* on Job—perhaps while he was visiting Clairvaux, where a copy was preserved.[19]

---

[18] The *De natura et dignitate amoris* is edited and translated by M.-M. Davy, *Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu. De la contemplation de Dieu. De la nature et de la dignité de l'amour* (Paris, 1953), pp. 70–137. Paul Verdeyen, in his full discussion of William's date of birth, career, and relationship to Bernard, dates these treatises to the early years of William's abbacy, 1121–24, without making fully clear why William could not have started to write them before 1121, when he was still a monk at Saint Nicasius; see *Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos*, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM) (Turnhout, 1966–), 86:v–xxxi (pp. xxv–xxvi). John Van Engen calls for reconsidering the chronology of William's writings in these early years in "Rupert of Deutz and William of Saint Thierry," *Revue bénédictine* 73 (1983), 327–336.

[19] Alberic of Tre Fontane mentions William's abbreviation of the *Moralia on Job* (preserved in Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale 935), in his *Chronicon*, ed.

The abbreviation suggests that after leaving the schools, he became increasingly interested in moral and psychological issues. Abelard, in contrast, developed the speculative strand in William's teaching, more connected to discussions in dialectic and focusing on the meaning of words in the theological statements. In the last week of his life, William of Champeaux took a monastic habit, a detail remembered independently by two monks, Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) and Simeon of Durham (d. 1129) but not recorded at Saint Victor, where William was remembered simply as a fellow canon of their community. A later tradition of Châlons records that his body was taken to Clairvaux.[20]

While Bernard was not particularly interested in the issues of dialectic that had so fascinated the young Abelard, he did absorb William's interest in the power of language to persuade and in applying the skills of rhetoric to preaching and exegesis. Unlike Abelard, for whom *logica* and *dialectica* were synonymous, William of Champeaux adhered to a more traditional vision of *logica* as embracing both dialectic and rhetoric.[21] He also gave great attention (at least in his earlier career) to speculative grammar, as formulated in the influential *Glosule* on Priscian's *Grammatical Institutes*, a text that Goswin recalls generated

---

P. Scheffer-Boichorst, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 29 vols (Hannover, 1826–94) (MGH SS), 23:819. William's sentences are preserved with those of Anselm in the *Liber pancrisis* in three manuscripts, including Troyes, Bibl. Mun. 425, from the third quarter of the 12th century; see Constant J. Mews and Cédric Giraud, "Le liber pancrisis, un florilège des pères et des maîtres modernes du XIIe siècle," *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi*, 64 (2006), 145–191.

[20] Symeon of Durham, *Historia regum*, in Arnold, Thomas (ed.). *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*. 2 vols. London, 1885. 2.259–60: "Gwillelmus de Campellis, Catalaunensis episcopus, viii. diebus ante exitum, suscepto habitu monachico, vita decedit xv. Kal. Februarii." Rupert of Deutz, *De vita vere apostolica* 5.16 (PL 170:659C–660C); *Necrologium*, ed. Augustine Molinier, *Obituaires de la province de Sens. Tome 1. Diocèses de Sens et de Paris*, 2 vols (Paris, 1902), 1:538: "magistri Guillelmi, Cathalauensis episcopi et nostri canonici." E. Michaud *Guillaume de Champeaux et les écoles de Paris au XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1867), p. 482, reports a record from Châlons that his body was taken to Clairvaux.

[21] Constant J. Mews, "*Logica* in the Service of Philosophy: William of Champeaux and his Influence," in *Schrift, Schreiber, Schenker. Studien zur Abtei Sankt Viktor zu Paris und zu den Viktorinern*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Corpus victorinum. Instrumenta 1) (Berlin, 2005), pp. 77–117, and "William of Champeaux, Abelard, and Hugh of Saint Victor: Platonism, Theology, and Scripture in Early Twelfth-Century France," in *Bibel und Exegese in Sankt Viktor zu Paris. Formen und Funktionen einesGrundtextes in europäischem Rahmen*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Corpus Victorinum. Instrumenta) (Münster, 2009), pp. 118–152.

many new interpretations in the schools in the years around 1111–12.[22] Bernard of Clairvaux may well have generated his love of language in his discussions with William of Champeaux in those early years at Clairvaux. William had reflected on rhetoric commentaries on the *De inventione* of Cicero and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and on the topics or principles underpinning arguments as taught by Boethius. In Bernard, however, William found a kindred spirit who could put eloquence into practice at the service of monasticism and the Church as a whole. Bernard's comment in 1140, that Abelard had "dabbled in the art of dialectic from his earliest youth," suggests Bernard's disapproval, not of dialectic in itself but of an imbalanced attention given to that discipline in particular. While Bernard of Clairvaux had no particular interest in the kind of precise logical discussion that William had engaged in as a teacher at Notre-Dame, his core philosophical and theological assumptions were shaped by those of a sophisticated schoolman, who became in later life increasingly sympathetic to the experience of reformed monasticism, as lived out at Clairvaux.

Abelard and Heloise, Clairvaux and the Paraclete

At the same time as Bernard was becoming, in the words of William of Saint Thierry, "one heart and one soul" with William of Champeaux, Peter Abelard was detaching himself intellectually from his former teacher in an even more extreme way than through dialectical argument. His key encounter was with Heloise, the young niece (perhaps then around 20 years old) of canon Fulbert. Abelard's account of what happened has an uncanny echo to that of William of Saint Thierry's report of the intimacy that developed between William of Champeaux and Bernard: "What more? We were united first in a house, then in spirit. Under the pretext of discipline, we gave ourselves completely to love; study of reading offered the hidden places that love chose, and then with our books open before us, more words of love than of our reading passed between us, more kissing than teaching."[23] In the

[22] On the influence of the *Glosule*, see the many studies of Irène Rosier-Catach, including "Abélard et les grammairiens: sur le verbe substantif et la prédication," *Vivarium* 41 (2003), 176–248.

[23] Abelard, *Historia Calamitatum* (Paris, 1978), pp. 72–73: "Quid plura? Primum domo una conjungimur, postmodum animo. Sub occasione itaque discipline, amori penitus vaccabamus, et secretos recessus, quos amor optabat, studium lectionis

Historia Calamitatum, written some 12 or 13 years after these events, Abelard gives a rhetorical spin to his memories. He emphasizes the carnal aspect of their relationship to heighten his argument that the punishment inflicted on him, cruel as it was, served a greater good, namely bringing him to religious life and an appreciation of the true consolation that came through God's Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. The fornication Abelard recalls echoes precisely the same false enthusiasm for love that inspired both William of Saint Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux to reflect on the nature of true love, unlike the worldliness of their contemporaries.

Within a collection of more than 100 love letters and poems, exchanged between a brilliant but controversial master and his unusually gifted female student, we find the two protagonists debating precisely the one passage from Cicero's *De amicitia* that Abelard subsequently includes, alongside many patristic texts about love, in the *Sic et Non*.[24] The master imagines Cicero's notion of a common soul shared by only very close friends to be "a universal thing" that exists between the two of them alone. His female student, whose writing about love is more shaped than his by a fusion of Ovidian motifs with scriptural imagery absorbed from a monastic liturgy, is more idealistic. She does not think they have yet attained the goal of selfless love. The same contrast is evident in the later exchange between Heloise and Abelard. While he simply contrasts his past fornication with great respect for Heloise, but also a measured distance, she argues that her love was always pure, that they should develop a new intimacy within the confines of the religious life, and that he should write as often as he had in the past.

---

offerebat. Apertis itaque libris, plura de amore quam de lectione verba se ingerebant, plura erant oscula quam sententie; sepius ad sinus quam ad libros reducebantur manus, crebrius oculos amor in se reflectebat quam lectio in scripturam dirigebat."

[24] The *Epistolae duorum amantium*, ed. Ewald Könsgen (Leiden, 1974), are the focus of my monograph, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard. Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France* (New York, 1999); within an additional chapter in a 2nd edition of this work (New York, 2008), pp. 179–202, I comment on a discovery made after its initial publication in 1999, that the passage of Cicero's *De amicitia* quoted by the man in Letter 24 (*Lost Love Letters*, p. 232) is the only sentence of this work included in Abelard's *Sic et Non*, q. 138:21, ed. B. Boyer and R. McKeon (Chicago, 1976–77), p. 473. See also Constant J. Mews, "Cicero and the Boundaries of Friendship in the Twelfth Century," *Viator* 38 (2007), 369–384, and "Discussing Love: The *Epistolae duorum amantium* and Abelard's *Sic et Non*," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 19 (2009), 130–147.

Heloise's interest in the selfless ideals of friendship was not so different from that recorded by William of Saint Thierry as marking the relationship of William of Champeaux and Bernard in those early years at Clairvaux. One was between a man and a woman, the other between two men. In different ways, all these individuals were experimenting with the intimacy afforded by friendship outside the normal structures of society. The primitive community at Clairvaux provided its admirers with an opportunity to create an authentic vision of the Church quite different from the worldly environment of the cathedral chapter of Notre-Dame. When Abelard's early liaison with Heloise ended with his castration and assumption of a monastic habit at Saint Denis in 1117, while she became—at his behest—a nun at the abbey of Argenteuil, where she had been raised, it would have seemed to William of Saint Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux an inevitable end to a scandal that could not continue.

Abelard did not stay long at Saint Denis. He obtained permission to distance himself from the abbey (where his teaching was causing a problem for the monks) and resume teaching at a small dependency, where he says that he imitated the pedagogy of Origen, as reported in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, using secular philosophy to approach "true philosophy"—in other words, he taught both logic and theology.[25] The allusion is a pointed reminder that Origen was not just a commentator on the Song of Songs but also a teacher of philosophy. This is the context in which he situated his treatise on the divine unity and trinity (subsequently identified by scholars as the *Theologia 'Summi boni'*), ostensibly to refute the tritheistic heresy he imputed to Roscelin of Compiègne, who had cast renewed aspersions on Abelard in around 1119. Roscelin, a canon of Saint Martin of Tours, had accused Abelard of ingratitude to his former teacher and ridiculed his support for Robert of Arbrissel as a great preacher, who surrounded himself with women and men. (Saint Martin of Tours was then in a property dispute with Fontevraud, occasioned by the entry to that abbey of Bertrada de Montfort, former Queen of France.)[26] Abelard was intent on showing that Roscelin was quite wrong to identify the three divine persons of the Trinity as separate *res* or realities. He was extending

[25] *Historia Calamitatum*, p. 82.

[26] For further details, see Constant J. Mews, "Robert d'Arbrissel, Roscelin et Abélard," *Revue Mabillon* 20 (2009), 33–54.

a theme, perhaps suggested to him by William of Champeaux (also developed by Hugh of Saint Victor in a different way), that through understanding divine power, wisdom, and goodness, we could understand the interrelationship of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet Abelard believed that his efforts to continue teaching within monastic life were blocked by the jealousy of rival teachers, who incited many "bishops, archbishops, abbots and whoever they could with a religious name" against himself. Abelard reports that his principal opponents were two former disciples of Anselm of Laon, Alberic of Reims and Lotulf of Novara, who taught at Reims (where William of Saint Thierry had recently become an abbot). His difficulties with them went back to 1113, when he had first challenged the cult status accorded to Anselm at Laon. Perhaps thinking he could clear his name, Abelard answered an invitation to attend the Council at Soissons in March/April 1121 and to bring his new composition with him.[27] What Abelard thought may have been an opportunity to defend himself became a judicial procedure. Abelard reports that "one of my adversaries murmured that he had seen it written in the book that only God the Father was omnipotent."[28] This precipitated a hostile verdict from the papal legate and archbishop, leading Abelard to be imprisoned for a while at Saint Medard, in Soissons. While he does not mention whether or not William of Champeaux was present at that assembly, presided over by Cono of Palestrina, it is very likely that Alberic and Lotulf saw themselves as serving the broader cause of Cono and William in purifying the Church of heresy. After the election of a new pope, Calixtus II, and his calling of a Council at Reims in 1119, at which so many new religious communities were given official support, it seemed a good opportunity to silence not just Abelard, but his supporters and patrons.

---

[27] *Historia Calamitatum*, p. 83: "Cum autem utrique Remis scolas regerent, crebris suggestionibus archiepiscopum suum Radulfum adversum me commoverunt, ut ascito Conano Prenestino episcopo, qui tunc legatione fungebatur in Gallia, conventiculum quoddam sub nomine concilii in Suesionensi civitate celebrarent, me que invitarent quatenus illud opusculum quod de Trinitate composueram me cum afferrem; et factum est ita." If this had been an official summons, Abelard would surely have said this. As a monk of Saint Denis, he was not under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Reims. It seems most likely that he accepted the invitation for the same reason that he approached the archbishop of Sens to present his case at Sens in 1141.

[28] *Historia Calamitatum*, p. 88: "Ut tamen non nichil dicere viderentur, quidam de adversariis meis id submurmuravit quod in libro scriptum deprenderat solum patrem Deum omnipotentem esse."

One of the abbots present at Soissons in 1121 was William of Saint Thierry, who would report to Bernard of Clairvaux in 1140 a version of the same accusation as made at that Council, about attributing omnipotence to the Father alone. Possibly this was Alberic of Reims, who accused Abelard of denying that God (as the Father) could beget God (as the Son), a claim to which he responded by recalling Augustine's dictum that people who think God can beget himself were in error, as there was no kind of reality (*res*) that could beget itself.[29] Whether William was himself the adversary who raised the charge at Soissons or whether he had heard it from Alberic of Reims, his assessment of Abelard's error would directly shape the subsequent views of Bernard of Clairvaux. In 1126 Bernard would try, unsuccessfully, to use his influence with the pope to have Alberic promoted to the bishopric of Châlons.[30] In 1134, Bernard mentioned in a letter to Gilduin, abbot of Saint Victor, that he had initially supported a young Italian scholar, Peter Lombard (already a *vir venerabilis*, suggesting he was already a mature student) in his studies at Reims, presumably under Alberic, but that he was now wishing to come to Paris.[31] Alberic was well known for not permitting study of secular authors at Reims, at least according to a satirical poem of Hugh Primas (himself trained at Orleans, where secular authors were widely read) that makes fun of the "unity" of thought he imposed in its cathedral school.[32] In suggesting that Peter Lombard should originally study at Reims, Bernard may have thought that this was a wise preparation for studying in the schools at Paris, perhaps as a way of encouraging someone who might stand up in the future to the arguments of Peter Abelard.

---

[29] *Historia Calamitatum*, pp. 84–85. William of Saint Thierry's presence at Soissons is attested in a charter noted by John F. Benton, "Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise" (1977), repr. in *Culture, Power and Personality* (note 5 above), p. 433.

[30] Ep. 13 (SBO 8, pp. 62–63).

[31] Ep. 410 (SBO 8, p. 391).

[32] *The Oxford Poems of Hugh Primas and the Arundel Lyrics*, ed. Chris J. McDonough (Toronto, 1984), no. 18, p. 62: "Nunc augetur sub Albrico./ Per hunc Remis urbs suprema,/ Per hunc portat diadema;… Non hic artes Marciani,/ Neque partes Prisciani,/ Non hic uana poetarum, Set archana prophetarum// Non leguntur hic poete,/ Set Iohennes et prophete./… Doctor totum contradicit./ Nos concordes super idem/ Confitemur unam fidem,/ Vnum deum et baptisma. Non hic error neque scisma,/ Set pax omnis et consensus." See also Chris J. McDonough, "Hugh Primas 18: A Poetic Glosula on Amiens, Reims and Peter Abelard," *Speculum* 61 (1986), 806–835.

In 1122 Abelard escaped from Saint Denis to the territory of Champagne, in particular to a certain property that he had been given in the bishopric of Troyes, where he started to construct an oratory that he dedicated first to the Holy Trinity but then re-dedicated to the Paraclete. The site was not far distant from Clairvaux, where Bernard was seeking to cultivate a good relationship with the Count of Champagne. Abelard's account in the *Historia Calamitatum* of the school that developed around his oratory recalls that given by William of Saint Thierry at Clairvaux.[33] He presented it through the filter of Jerome's eulogy in the *Contra Jovinianum* of "the sons of the prophets," disciples of Elisha, presenting them as the true inspiration of the philosophers. A new second book added to the *Theologia Christiana*, a revised and much expanded version of the original treatise condemned at Soissons, contained much new polemic against the false monasticism such as he had abandoned at Saint Denis. In its own way, the early community at the Paraclete was not so different from that at Clairvaux. In both cases, the ideal was to create an authentic ascetic community in which its members lived out their formal ideals, without the difficulties presented by a large and wealthy institutional structure. The difference was that whereas monks of the order of Cîteaux sought to base their way of life on strict fidelity to the Rule of Benedict, the students at the Paraclete were bound by a much less rigid example, that of fidelity to ancient philosophers and desert monks, without any clear structure by which to follow their way of life. Not surprisingly, the experiment struggled with internal division and would eventually collapse by around 1127, when Abelard eventually gave up the experiment and took up a position as abbot of Saint Gildas in Brittany, an opportunity provided him through family connections.

Bernard's support for Alberic of Reims in 1126 may well have provoked Abelard to identify him as one of two "new apostles" stirred up against him by his former rivals. One was reputed to have restored the life of canons regular, the other the life of monks. These two people, "preaching through the world," were responsible for ruining his reputation, not just among ecclesiastical authorities but also in the face of secular powers. Abelard acknowledges that at the time he believed that any ecclesiastical assembly would be ready to condemn him as a heretic. There seems little reason to doubt the traditional identifi-

[33] *Historia Calamitatum*, pp. 92–94.

cation of these two "new apostles" with Norbert and Bernard, even though no specific polemic against Abelard from this time is known.[34] Abelard could have interpreted their increasing influence in the Latin Church as hostile to his interests. In around 1127 Bernard wrote to Suger, praising him for having instituted major reforms at Saint Denis, transforming its cloister from a worldly environment into a place of strict discipline. This praise served to urge Suger to have nothing to do with the powerful and corrupt "cleric and knight" Stephen of Garlande, who in 1127 would be temporarily deprived of his position as seneschal or principal advisor to the king.[35] While Bernard was not himself directly responsible for Stephen's fall from grace, his letter clearly shows how he was aligned to forces hostile to Abelard's patron. Even if Bernard had not engaged in direct polemic against Abelard, it could have seemed to Abelard that his increasingly insecure position in Champagne was partly due to the growing support enjoyed by the abbot of Clairvaux.

The previous letter in the register of Bernard's correspondence is a treatise addressed to Hugh of Saint Victor, answering three questions that Hugh had put to him about the views of a certain teacher.[36] Bernard's claim that he did not know precisely whom Hugh was talking about deserves to be taken seriously. According to Hugh (who himself seems to have been relying on a garbled report), this teacher had said that the scriptural verse "Unless anyone is reborn from water and the holy Spirit, he will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5) implied that nobody could be saved without having received the visible sacrament, or through martyrdom, and that this seemed excessively unjust. This prompted Bernard to deliver his own thoughts on the question of the unbaptised. Like Hugh, Bernard was sure that there were opportunities for those who came before Christ to find a remedy against original sin. The case of the good thief, to whom Christ had said "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43) itself illustrated how baptism was not in itself essential to ensure salvation, even if baptism was now required of all Christians. In his way, Bernard was putting forward an argument with which Abelard might

[34] *Historia Calamitatum*, p. 97.
[35] Ep. 78 (SBO 7, pp. 201–212).
[36] Ep. 77 (SBO 7, pp. 184–200); See Hugh Feiss, "*Bernardus Scholasticus:* The Correspondence of Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of St Victor on Baptism," in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 360–377.

have sympathy. He opposed the way, however, that this "inventor of new claims" seemed to be finding an argument supposedly hidden from Ambrose and Augustine, and with some stronger authority. This teacher also claimed, according to Hugh, that all the upright people of the past who came before Christ had complete foreknowledge, so that nothing that would come was hidden to them. This, Bernard thought, was a complete travesty of history and of the meaning of the Incarnation. The third claim attributed to this teacher was a variant of the first argument, that the report to Nicodemus that one needed to be reborn "of water and the spirit" made ignorance sufficient cause for damnation, and that ignorance could not itself be a sin. There were plenty of cases, Bernard argued, where ignorance was indeed a cause of sin.

Taken literally, the arguments attributed to this teacher by Hugh of Saint Victor and ridiculed by Bernard of Clairvaux have little internal coherence. During the 1120s Abelard had not formulated any coherent teaching, at least in writing, about the place of baptism, the foreknowledge of those who came before Christ, or about whether ignorance was in itself a sin. In the *Theologia Christiana* he does lay out certain ideas, however, that could have given rise to certain of Hugh's questions. His claim that the philosophers knew as much as the prophets about the Trinity could be construed as teaching that all people had a latent knowledge of the truths that underpinned their redemption. The implicit technique of identifying apparent internal contradictions within Scripture is implicit within the *Sic et Non*, which Abelard was certainly working on in the 1120s to cover a full range of the three themes that he would identify as central to salvation: faith in God and the Incarnation, sacraments, and charity. The ideas reported by Hugh to Bernard, presumably by a witness hostile to Abelard, created a caricature to which Bernard was duty-bound to respond. While Bernard may not have heard accurate reports about Abelard's teaching, Hugh of Saint Victor was certainly warning his students of the dangers of inflated intellectualism in ways that suggest he was referring to Peter Abelard.[37] During the 1120s, however, Abelard's theological teaching seems to have been relatively little known, and confined to oral report. The *Sic et Non* gave a framework for discussion of a range of theological questions, without providing any clear answers. Abelard's teaching

[37] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicon*, III.4 and 13, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York, 1991), pp. 89, 95.

in this decade was as ill-defined as the educational structure of the school attached to the oratory of the Paraclete in the years between 1122 and 1127.

Abelard, Bernard, and the Paraclete

Bernard would inevitably become more aware of Abelard after 1129, when he invited Heloise, expelled with her nuns from Argenteuil by Suger, to take over the abandoned oratory of the Paraclete. In January 1131 both Bernard and Abelard were present at the consecration of a new altar at Morigny by Pope Innocent II, then exiled in France while a rival pope (Anacletus II) was resident in Rome. The way Abelard is described in the Chronicle of Morigny as "a master of the schools, to whom the whole world flocked" suggests that Abelard's reputation was already on the rise.[38] Abelard enjoyed some influential admirers, including Cardinal Gui of Castello, papal legate in France. At some time Gui obtained a copy of the *Theologia Christiana* and *Sic et Non* likely to derive from Abelard's own working copy of these two texts, in which Abelard himself sketched out the contents of the *Theologia 'Scholarium'*—the third and most mature version of a treatise on which he kept working for more than 20 years. Given that Gui was a senior figure in the curia, and would himself succeed Innocent II as Pope Celestine II for eight months between 1143 and 1144, Bernard had reason to be concerned about the extent of Abelard's potential influence in Rome.

Abelard was undoubtedly assisted by the papal privilege accorded to the Paraclete in November 1131, while the pope was in Auxerre. Bernard was a key figure in the entourage of Innocent II during his period of exile in France. The grant of official approval to the abbey of the Paraclete was itself a tribute to the diplomatic success of Heloise in being able to transform that oratory into a self-sufficient monastic community, supported by local nobility—in particular by the court of Champagne. A particularly intriguing moment in the early years of the Paraclete is an event reported in a letter addressed "To Bernard, venerable and dearly beloved brother in Christ, abbot of Clairvaux,

[38] *La Chronique de Morigny*, ed. Mirot, pp. 53–54; see David E. Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 3, 21.

his fellow priest, Peter."[39] The greeting suggests that at least in formal terms, Abelard wished to establish himself with Bernard on equal terms. Bernard had apparently been welcomed at the Paraclete "on a holy visitation"—as if to demonstrate that the community was fully acceptable to the most important monastic authority of the day. In a letter rich in irony and subtle nuance, Abelard described how he had been received with great rejoicing by Heloise, "your daughter in Christ and my sister, who is called an abbess of that place…as an angel," after having been desired there for a long time. Bernard had apparently strengthened her and her sisters with an encouragement to holiness.[40] There seems no reason to doubt that Heloise and her nuns did find particular solace in the edification that he could give.

Bernard expressed some surprise, however, at a change in the wording of the Lord's Prayer at the abbey—namely their use of the term *supersubstantialem*, found in Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer, rather than *quotidianum*, the term standard in Luke. He thought this an uncalled innovation provoked by Abelard, a hint that he may have had some reserve about Abelard's influence at the Paraclete. Abelard's justification of their use of the text provided by Matthew followed an argument he had presented elsewhere, that because Matthew had been present at the Sermon on the Mount, and had originally written his Gospel in Hebrew (as Jerome's many references to the Hebrew version of this Gospel had led many to believe), it was the more authentic version. The fact that Jerome had translated *epiousion* incorrectly in translating Matthew was not known to Abelard.[41] What was significant was that Abelard's zeal for liturgical authenticity was interpreted by Bernard as a potentially disturbing innovation. There was a bigger principle at stake, namely that "usage should not be preferred to logic nor custom to truth." Abelard quoted advice of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury that he choose from whatever individual

[39] Ep. 10, ed. E.R. Smits, *Peter Abelard, Letters IX–XIV* (Groningen, 1983), pp. 239–247, with detailed discussion of relations between Bernard and Abelard on pp. 120–136. See now the commentary and translation by Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Letters of Peter Abelard. Beyond the Personal* (Washington, DC, 2008), pp. 75–84, 85–98.

[40] Ep. 10, ed. Smits, p. 239: "Venerabili atque in Christo dilectissimo fratri Bernard Claraeuallensi abbati Petrus compresbyter. Cum nuper Paraclitum uenissem quibusdam compulsus negotiis ibi peragendis, filia uestra in Christo et soror nostra, quae illuc loci abbatissa dicitur, cum summa exultatione mihi retulis uos illuc diu desideratum causa sanctae uisitationis aduenisse et non tanquam hominem, sed quasi angelum tam eam quam sorores suas exhortationibus corroborasse."

[41] See the comments of Ziolkowski, *Beyond the Personal*, p. 81.

church a liturgical practice that was appropriate for use in England.[42] It was not legitimate to enforce uniformity when tradition recognised that local practice should be observed.

Abelard then launches his own riposte, accusing Bernard's order of imposing innovation in the performance of the liturgy by insisting on strict fidelity to the Rule of Benedict. This involved rejecting many familiar hymns, reciting one hymn (*Aeterne rerum conditor*) throughout the year, along with a host of other minor changes: the absence of litanies and processions; maintenance of the *allelulia* even during Lent; and use of the invitatory hymn and *Gloria* (an expression of joy) on Good Friday. As Chrysogonus Waddell observed, Abelard is remarkably familiar with the detail of Cistercian liturgy. He insists on the principle that each community should be able to work out its own version of the liturgy rather than follow the practice of uniformity insisted upon in Cistercian practice, and imposed in General Chapters of the order. As Waddell recognized, Abelard's familiarity with the Cistercian liturgy, itself based in the first 50 years of the Order on a desire for strict conformity for what was imagined to be the Ambrosian liturgy known to Benedict.[43] As it happened, the Cistercian liturgy would undergo significant reforms by 1147, in a process watched over by Bernard of Clairvaux. Nonetheless, it was one of Waddell's major discoveries to establish that the surviving liturgical manuscripts of the Paraclete (from the 13th and 15th centuries respectively) transmitted the early version of the Cistercian liturgy and hymnal, prior to the reforms of 1147. He demonstrated that the Paraclete liturgy, at least according to these later witnesses, effectively combined the Cistercian liturgy with a range of other hymns and prayers, many of which were composed by Abelard.

Abelard himself composed an entire hymnal for the day and night office of the Paraclete, introducing each of its three books with a

---

[42] Ep. 10, ed. Smits, p. 244; trans. Ziolkowski, *Beyond the Personal*, pp. 91–92.

[43] Chrysogonus Waddell, "Saint Bernard and the Cistercian Office at the Abbey of the Paraclete," in *The Chimaera of his Age. Studies on Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder and John R. Sommerfeldt, Cistercian Studies Series 63 (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 76–121. Waddell incorporated precious research about the relationship of the Cistercian liturgical texts to those of the Paraclete in volumes 3–7 of the Cistercian Liturgy Series, published in 1985 by Gethsemani Abbey, Trappist, Kentucky: *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary and the Paraclete Breviary I. Introduction and Commentary* [CLS 3]; *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary II. Edition* [CLS 4]; *The Paraclete Breviary IIIA Edition, Kalendar and Temporal Cycle. IIIB Edition. The Sanctoral Cycle. IIIC Edition of the Saints, Varia, Indices* [CLS 5–7].

preface in which he responds to the concern of Heloise that hymns should make authentic statements when performed in the liturgy, not create hypocrites and liars of those who sing them at particular times of the day.[44] Heloise went further than the Cistercians in her desire for authenticity with the liturgy. Whereas the Cistercian liturgy required, at least through the edict of Stephen Harding, that monks restrict themselves to the original hymns known to Benedict and supposedly composed by Saint Ambrose, Heloise wanted Abelard to produce his own set of hymns that could supplant those with which she was familiar. All of the hymns that Heloise mentioned to Abelard as inappropriate for the time that they were sung happen to occur in the relatively restricted hymnal of Montier-la-Celle, used in the priory of Saint Ayoul, Provins (where Abelard says that he stayed, when he first escaped to Champagne), which raises the possibility that Heloise may have taken over a hymnal from Saint Ayoul when she first moved to the Paraclete.[45] Heloise seems to have shared Cistercian interest in creating liturgical authenticity but felt less bound to strict adherence to the original precepts of Stephen Harding. The liturgy recorded in the Paraclete manuscripts may have been created by Heloise herself in a careful combination of early (pre-1147) Cistercian practice with some, though not all, of the hymns that she commissioned from Abelard. Waddell's discovery about early Cistercian elements in the Paraclete liturgy is paralleled by his finding that the observances appended to the only complete copy of Abelard's Rule for the Paraclete, much simpler and more austere than those devised by Abelard, are significantly influenced by early Cistercian practice.[46] Heloise was able to adapt and simplify Cistercian statutes in a way that was relevant to her community, while Abelard tended more to argue with Bernard about issues of liturgy and observance.

---

[44] On the prefaces to the hymnal, see Constant J. Mews, "Liturgy and Identity at the Paraclete: Heloise, Abelard and the Evolution of the Cistercian Reform," and "Liturgy and Monastic Observance in Practice at the Paraclete," in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy of Heloise and Abelard*, ed. Marc Stewart and David Wulstan (Ottawa, 2003), pp. 19–33, 100–112. The prefaces are also introduced and translated in Ziolkowski, *Beyond the Personal*, pp. 34–51.

[45] Mews, "Liturgy and Identity at the Paraclete," pp. 28–29.

[46] Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *The Paraclete Statutes. Institutiones Nostrae. Introduction, Edition, Commentary*, CLS 20 (Gethsemani Abbey, 1987). For his edition of the early Cistercian observances (nos. 9–26), from which the Paraclete *Institutiones* derive, see *Narrative and Legislative Texts* (note 15 above), pp. 187–191.

Bernard and Abelard's Theological Teaching in the 1130s

As Abelard gradually re-established himself as a teacher in Paris in the early 1130s, Bernard inevitably became more aware of his presence. The exact chronology of Abelard's movements during the 1130s is uncertain. It is quite possible that when Abelard wrote the *Historia Calamitatum* in 1132/33 he may already have been invited by Stephen de Garlande to resume teaching at the public schools of Sainte Geneviève. In 1133, tension between Sainte Geneviève and Saint Victor came to a head with the murder of Thomas, prior of Saint Victor. Bernard was closely involved in supporting the cause of the canons of Saint Victor against the archdeacon Theobald, whose nephews were implicated in the murder and who was himself an ally of Stephen de Garlande, dean of Sainte Geneviève since early in the reign of Louis VI.[47] Yet although he had returned as royal chancellor by 1131, Stephen no longer had the same unquestioned power as before. Under Bishop Stephen of Senlis (1123–42), the reform movement was gradually establishing itself in the cathedral chapter, while the public school at Saint Victor was emerging as a significant centre for theological education within Paris. With the death of Louis VI in 1137 and the accession of the young Louis VII, Stephen of Garlande no longer exerted influence in the royal chancery, while Suger was now able to consolidate his influence within the kingdom of France. His rebuilding of Saint Denis, consecrated in 1144, marked a powerful statement, seeking to turn Saint Denis into the leading church of the kingdom. Prior to the debacle of the Second Crusade in 1145, it seemed as if reformed monasticism could assert itself as a model for reform of the Church as a whole.

Within Paris, the abbey of Saint Victor was asserting itself as a dominant centre of theological education, both through its public school and through its interior claustral school, where Hugh of Saint Victor (d. 1141) was its leading light. While Hugh never engaged in direct polemic against Abelard, he leaves little doubt in his *De sacramentis*—a work that he started to compose in the early 1130s but never completed—that he is combating individual ideas of Abelard, whether in relation to faith in God, the sacraments, or charity. Yet the fact that Hugh never engages in any direct polemic with Abelard or any other

[47] Epp. 158–63 (SBO 7, pp. 365–371).

teacher as an individual is significant. In every version of his *Theologia*, Abelard had tended to engage in direct polemic, whether against Roscelin or against unnamed *fratres*. In the *Theologia 'Scholarium*,' much of which was drafted no later than the early 1130s, Abelard eliminated a good deal of his earlier invective against Roscelin, but gave new emphasis to his criticism of those masters who now occupied "seats of pestilence against us, one in France, another in Burgundy, the third in Angers, the fourth in Bourges."[48] Abelard does not hesitate to criticise Anselm of Canterbury for an image of the Trinity that he finds less than satisfactory.[49] In terms of scholastic argument, Abelard was much more pugnacious than Hugh of Saint Victor, who confines himself to more measured discussion of particular arguments. While capable of close and detailed discussion of particular arguments about the Trinity, Abelard's rhetorical style, forged in his early debates with Roscelin, invited critics to respond in like measure.

Abelard never completed a written synthesis of theology comparable to Hugh's *De sacramentis*, a vast compendium of teaching framed around the notion that God had provided the Hebrews, and now the Christians, with a series of visible signs through which God's teaching was revealed. Hugh started to compose the *De sacramentis* in the early 1130s and continued to work on it until his death in February 1141. He integrated into the work many of the ideas that he had delivered previously in lectures, such as in the *Sententie de divinitate*, taken down by Lawrence of Durham from his teaching on faith, the sacraments, and good works. While Abelard boldly envisaged a series of monographs on faith, the Incarnation, and ethics—namely, through a *Theologia*, an *Ethica* (of which only the first book, on vice, and the beginning of a second, on virtue, survives), and perhaps a projected *Anthropologia*, mentioned briefly in his Commentary on Romans—he did deliver *sententie* on the structure of questions that he laid out in the *Sic et Non*, namely on faith, the sacraments, and charity.[50] Abelard

---

[48] Abelard, *Theologia 'Scholarium'* 2.64, ed. Buytaert-Mews, CCCM 13:439–40. Not all the masters he mentions can be easily identified. The first is certainly Alberic of Reims in France (made archbishop of Bourges in 1136), the second possibly Gilbert the Universal (teaching in Auxerre, before coming bishop of London 1128–34), the third Ulger of Angers, bishop of that city 1126–52, the fourth perhaps Joscelin de Vierzy, teacher at Bourges before becoming bishop of Soissons (1126–52).

[49] Abelard, *Theologia 'Scholarium'* 2.120, p. 467.

[50] For an overview of these issues, see Constant J. Mews, *Abelard and Heloise* (New York, 2005), ch. 10, pp. 204–225.

rewrote the beginning of the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* to outline his idea that these were the three essentials of salvation and that his *summa* served as an introduction to the major themes of Scripture. While Abelard never composed his own synthesis comparable to Hugh's *De sacramentis*, he did deliver *sententie* in oral teaching that responded to many of the questions he had raised in the *Sic et Non*. The most widely circulated report of his oral teaching, known as the *Sententie magistri Petri Abaelardi*, survives in a number of different recensions, some of which have clearly been extended by reference to Abelard's *Theologia 'Scholarium.'* Looser reports of Abelard's *sententie* survive in the *Sententie Parisienses* and *Sententie Florianenses*, incomplete records whose informality attests the unstructured character of Abelard's teaching. These records are inevitably shaped by the particular interests and limitations of the student deputed to take down the lectures of the master.[51] In delivering *sententie* that were taken down by students, Abelard would have been imitating a practice already established by Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux. Inevitably, reports compiled by students were not necessarily as accurate a summary of the master's opinion as a complete treatise. Nonetheless, they provided an accessible opportunity for students to grasp the central issues being raised by Abelard, without the detail provided by his *Theologia 'Scholarium.'*

Essential to the way of theology emerging in Paris during the 1130s was that it proceeded by way of measured arguments *pro* and *contra* any given question. These arguments were first of all oral. They made sense in the context of the classroom, but they were acquiring the authority of written texts, with a legitimacy comparable to the writing of the Fathers of the Church, frequently assembled in anthologies like the *Sic et Non* (a compilation that survives in more manuscripts than any single version of Abelard's *Theologia*). If another teacher had a difference of opinion with what was being said, then he might present that argument in order to show its inadequacy in one way or another. Walter of Mortagne, a former student of William of Champeaux who became teacher at Laon in 1120 (not without incurring an argument with Alberic of Reims), composed a number of letters to

[51] Constant Mews, "Orality, Literacy and Authority in the Twelfth-Century Schools," *Exemplaria* 2 (1990), 475–500; repr. in *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (London, 2002).

various teachers, including Alberic, Hugh of Saint Victor, and Peter Abelard, asserting differences of opinion without ever engaging in personal polemic. They are letters seeking a positive response. Walter's letter to Abelard, taking him to task for using the phrase *portio* as an image of the relationship of the Son to the Father, is a case in point. Walter had read a draft of the opening of the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* and was concerned by its wording. Abelard responded by revising that particular passage in a subsequent draft of that section. Walter was aware that disciples could sometimes distort a teacher's opinion and was careful not to make hasty assumptions about what Abelard taught.[52] In all his discussions, Walter never appealed to the authority of Rome to intervene in an academic debate. Hugh behaved similarly, never urging papal authority to intervene in any agreement, instead trusting that any issue could be settled through reason and reference to the authority of the Fathers.

The response of William of Saint Thierry, when he came across both Abelard's *Theologia 'Scholarium'* and the so-called book of his sentences (*liber sententiarum*), was very different. Rather than writing to Abelard, asking him to clarify his opinion, he wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux and Geoffrey of Chartres, papal legate in France, raising alarm that these texts were apparently gaining influence in Rome.[53] Assuming that both were compositions of Abelard, he quoted from both texts, observing that they were substantially the same in the content of their teaching. He observed that the argument of the *Theologia* was found in more summary form in the *liber sententiarum*, but that this also summarized Abelard's teaching on a range of other issues, namely about Christ, the sacraments, and ethics, otherwise only hinted at in the opening of the *Theologia*. He later recalled that he had been obliged to interrupt his commentary on the Song of Songs to act

[52] Walter of Mortagne, *Epistola ad Petrum Abaelardum*, ed. H. Ostlender, Florilegium Patristicum 19 (Bonn, 1929), pp. 34–35: "Solent autem frequenter contingere quod discipuli discordent a sensu magistrorum, sive per imperitiam verba eorum male exponendo, sive ad ostensionem sui aliquas novitates inducendo, quas causa maioris auctoritatis magistris suis, licet ignorantibus, consueverunt ascribere." Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard*, pp. 106, 116–117.

[53] Paul Verdeyen edits William's letter and accompanying treatise, CCCM 87A. The surviving fragments of the *liber sententiarum* are edited by myself alongside an edition of the more widely diffused *Sententie magistri Petri Abaelardi*, ed. D.E. Luscombe et al., CCCM 14:155–71.

against Abelard.[54] From early in his career as a monk at Saint Nicasius, Reims, he had been fascinated by themes of love, in particular the evolution of *amor* to *caritas*, and wanted to show how the Fathers of the Church could offer an alternative vision of love from that of secular writers. More than Bernard, he was interested in writing speculative treatises about the nature of faith in the Trinity as the fruit of the process of growing in understanding through grace. He was genuinely concerned that Abelard's *Theologia* offered a vision of the Trinity in which the full divinity of the three divine persons was compromised by discussion of how *Father, Son*, and *Holy Spirit* were names applied to God to signify specific divine attributes in a way which implied the Son and the Holy Spirit were less than fully divine. This was the accusation made against Abelard at Soissons in 1121, where William had himself been present. As he read further in the *Theologia* and book of Abelard's sentences (the *liber sententiarum*), he found that Abelard was still making this claim and many others. As a result, he addressed a treatise about the errors they contained to both Bernard of Clairvaux and Geoffrey of Chartres, the papal legate, sending them as well the two texts that he found so alarming.

While it is known that Bernard initially received William's letter and accompanying treatise during Lent and promised to discuss the matter further at Easter, there has long been debate about the exact year this happened, dependent on the date assigned to the Council of Sens. While traditionally assigned to 1140 (2 June), on the strength of a problematic entry in a chronicle of Soissons, the arguments for dating it to the Octave of Pentecost 1141 (25 May) are cogent. In particular, Stephen, cardinal bishop of Palestrina, to whom Bernard wrote immediately after the Council, was only appointed at Easter 1141.[55] This means that William must have written to Bernard in Lent 1140, prompting Bernard to prepare an initial draft of his own treatise (Ep. 190) against Abelard. Bernard also suggested that they should meet to discuss how best to act after Easter 1140, preparing a revised final version of that treatise, to which 19 *capitula* were attached.

[54] William, *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei*, Prol. ed. Jean Déchanet, *Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu (Lettre d'or)*, Sources chrétiennes 223 (Paris, 1975), p. 136.

[55] The arguments for 1141 were first put forward by Pietro Zerbi (picking up on issues raised by Ferruccio Gastaldelli) and are summarized by Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)" (note 1 above), and supported by Verbaal, *Een middeleeuws drama* (note 1 above).

Bernard preached his sermon *de conversione* in Paris on the Feast of All Saints (1 November) about the errors of Abelard, revising it in a way that was more suitable for students at Epiphany.[56] Following canonical procedure, Bernard did meet with Abelard a few times, urging him to modify his text. Abelard responded to Bernard's Ep. 190 with a declaration of his own orthodoxy, one for general circulation, the *Confessio fidei "Universis,"* the other a very detailed *Apologia* of which only the first section survives.[57] Sometime in the first half of 1141, Abelard asked the archbishop of Sens, Henri Sanglier, if he could defend himself against the charges being made by Bernard at a forthcoming Council, to be held at Sens at Pentecost 1141.[58] He may have thought that with his connections to Stephen Garlande, a relation of Sanglier, he might have had a chance of defending himself at the newly built, but still incomplete cathedral, where the archbishop was planning a public exposition of its relics.[59]

Dating the Council to 1141 rather than to 1140, and thus William's sending of his treatise to Bernard to Lent 1140, helps us make better sense of the acute political crisis to which both William of Saint Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux were responding when they sought official action against Peter Abelard and his supporters. In April 1139, Pope Innocent II had convened the Second Lateran Council to assert his authority in Rome after the death of his rival, Anacletus II, pope from 1131 until his death in 1138. Bernard, a key figure in supporting the cause of Innocent II during his period of exile in France, had been integrally involved in promoting the cause of the Second Lateran Council and the authority of Innocent within the Church as a whole. There was acute anxiety among Innocent's supporters, however, that schism could be fomented again. The city of Rome was effectively moving into a situation of conflict with the papacy over its claims to temporal lordship. Arnold of Brescia, an outspoken Augustinian canon

---

[56] Bernard, *Sermo de conuersione ad clericos* (SBO 4, pp. 69–116).

[57] Abelard, *Confessio fidei "Universis,"* ed. Charles S.F. Burnett, "Peter Abelard. Confessio fidei 'Universis.' A Critical Edition of Abelard's Reply to Accusations of Heresy," *Mediaeval Studies* 48 (1986), 111–138; *Apologia contra Bernardum*, ed. E.-M. Buytaert, CCCM 11:159–68.

[58] Raymond Klibansky, "Peter Abailard and Bernard of Clairvaux. A Letter by Abailard," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 5 (1961), 1–27 (pp. 6–7); introduction and translation by Ziolkowski, *Beyond the Personal*, pp. 99–110.

[59] On Stephen of Garlande as a relation of Henri Sanglier and the building of the cathedral of Sens, see Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)" (note 1 above), pp. 354–357.

who had been strongly involved with the cause of the commune in Rome and had become very critical of both Innocent II and Bernard of Clairvaux, came to Paris, where he attached himself to Peter Abelard. Arnold made common cause with Cardinal Hyacinth Bobbone, one of the leading Roman clerics who had supported Anacletus II in acting against Bernard.[60] William of Saint Thierry's fear about the potential influence of Abelard's theological writing was directly linked to his fear that supporters such as Arnold and Cardinal Hyacinth might contribute to the re-emergence of schism within the Roman church. If sympathizers of Anacletus II were sympathizing with Abelard in questioning the full omnipotence of the Trinity, then the authority of the Church and message of Christ himself could be challenged.

Bernard of Clairvaux understood the seriousness of the situation, given that Abelard had even more significant sympathizers in the papal curia, notably Cardinal Gui of Castello, described in the rubric of the letter that Bernard sent him immediately after the Council of Sens as "Master Gui of Castello, who had been a disciple of Peter and about whom he used to presume a great deal, who subsequently became Pope Celestine."[61] As Pope Celestine II, Guido lasted only eight months (poisoned, according to one report), but he did permit Arnold to return to Rome. Guido's successor, Pope Lucius II, only lasted a year, dying of injuries sustained in leading a military attack on the commune of Rome.[62] In 1144, a Cistercian monk was consecrated as Pope Eugenius III, but immediately had to escape the city to avoid a hostile crowd. The rubric articulates the fear that Bernard (or rather the editor of his letters, Geoffrey of Auxerre) felt about the seriousness of the threat that Bernard perceived in the influence of Abelard's writings. If Gui were to give sympathy to Abelard's *Theologia* (of which he certainly possessed a copy, along with the *Sic et Non*), then he might give support to Abelard's questioning of core doctrines of the Christian faith. The fact that Arnold of Brescia had attached himself to Peter Abelard and was working with Cardinal Hyacinth Bobbone implied that the situation had moved far beyond the subtleties of scholastic

[60] Our key witness is John of Salisbury, *Liber pontificalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1986), p. 63: "Ob quam causam a domino Innocentio papa depositus et extrusus ab Italia, descendit in Franciam et adhesit Petro Abaielardo, partesque eius cum domino Iacinto, qui nunc cardinalis est, aduersus abbatem Clareuallensem studiosius fouit."

[61] Ep. 192 (SBO 8, p. 43): "Ad magistrum Guidonem de Castello, qui Petri discipulus fuerat et de quo potissimum praesumerat, qui et postea Papa Caelestinus fuit."

[62] Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)" (note 1 above), p. 376.

debate into a situation of major political conflict. Bernard was persuaded by William of Saint Thierry that the very survival of Christian orthodoxy was at stake. As he reported to Innocent II immediately after the Council:

> In cities and castles, darkness is being spread in place of light; everywhere poison is being put forward to everybody in place of honey, or rather in honey… A new Gospel is being forged for the crowds and the peoples, a new faith is being propounded, a foundation that is different from what has been established. There is disputation that is immoral about virtues and vices, unfaithful about the sacraments of the Church, and neither simple nor sober about the depths of the Holy Trinity; rather everything is served up to us as perversity, everything beyond what is normal and different from what we accept.[63]

The tumult provoked by the disturbances in Rome was not confined to Italy. At Reims, a commune had controlled the city, with its own clergy, in the years 1139–40, effectively preventing Samson, the new archbishop, from taking possession of the city until August 1140.[64] William of Saint Thierry and Bernard had reason to be concerned. Bernard presented himself as David, needing to assault the new Goliath, whose shield-bearer was Arnold of Brescia.

In his treatise to the pope, Bernard did not simply repeat the accusations made by William of Saint Thierry. Bernard's gift for synthesis and clear argument can be seen in the way he simplifies William's treatise and turns it into a meditation on Christian faith. Whereas William goes into great detail to identify passages in the *Theologia* and *liber sententiarum* that support the 13 troublesome propositions that he detected in those works, Bernard focuses on two main issues, whose seriousness he wanted to bring to public attention, namely Abelard's tendency to minimise God's omnipotence and his apparent questioning of Christ's redemption of humanity. The first of these two points was very dependent on the first claim made by William of Saint Thierry, that Abelard taught that God the Father was omnipotent but that the Son, as wisdom or the power of discernment, was only a certain kind of power and that Holy Spirit, as benignity, was not power at all. Bernard tended to paraphrase rather than quote in detail the same key passages of the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* relating to the generation

[63] Ep. 189 (SBO 8, pp. 13–14).
[64] Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141)" (note 1 above), pp. 360–363.

of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit as William had cited, perhaps marked out as dangerous in the copy of the *Theologia* that he had been sent.[65] In these speculative matters, Bernard was visibly less at ease than William of Saint Thierry. He was more inclined to demonstrate Abelard's irrationality—as sometimes like Arius in dividing the Son from the Father, sometimes like Sabellius in blurring the distinction between the two persons—than to identify the philosophical issues of the relationship of words to the reality they predicated.

Bernard was much more at home in discussing the Redemption. Although William had included as one of his 13 contested claims Abelard's reported questioning in the *liber sententiarum* of the traditional view that humanity had fallen through original sin to a legitimate yoke to the devil, Bernard turned this into the major theme of his treatise. In revising its text, Bernard added that he had also read Abelard's argument in the Commentary on Romans, the source of the section that William had found in the *liber sententiarum*.[66] The fact that Bernard devoted twice as much attention to Abelard's account of the Redemption as to his discussion of the Trinity reveals the particular direction of his concern. Bernard interpreted Abelard's criticism of the patristic argument that humanity had legitimately fallen under the devil's yoke (an image of the human condition taken for granted by both Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux but questioned by Saint Anselm) as effectively denying the purpose of the Incarnation itself.[67] Abelard's propensity for bold criticism of traditional perspectives invited the accusation that he was rejecting tradition and pursuing novelty for its own sake, thus placing him outside tradition. Bernard presented Abelard as a threat to Christian orthodoxy because he seemed to deny the very reason God became man. The irony was that Abelard and Bernard both shared an intense devotion to the figure of Jesus as embodying divine love. They differed in their perception of the human condition and of humanity's need for grace. Bernard mocked those passages in which Abelard celebrated God's love, shown through the

---

[65] Bernard alludes to quotes from *Theologia 'Scholarium'* 2.112–16 and 2.123–24 (CCCM 13:463–65, 468–70) in Ep. 190.4–8 (SBO 8, pp. 21–23).

[66] Ep. 190.11 (SBO 8, p. 26); see in particular Abelard, *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Romanos* II, ed. E.-M. Buytaert, CCCM 11:117–18.

[67] On the patristic roots of this image, see Giles E.M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance* (London, 2004), pp. 167–170.

suffering and death of Christ, while minimizing the reality of original sin. He considered Abelard dangerously naive in his assessment of the human condition and, thus, our need for Christ. Reflecting on the Redemption gave Bernard the opportunity to offer a powerful sermon on what he considered to be the three essentials necessary for salvation: the form of humility by which God emptied himself, the measure of charity that he extended to death on the cross, and the sacrament of Redemption for which he endured death. William of Saint Thierry had raised a host of 13 separate issues by which he believed he could identify Abelard's thought as wanting. While Bernard mentioned in some of these in passing and others that he had noticed, he focused on a single core argument, namely Christ's Redemption. After giving limited recognition to William's concern with Abelard's discussion of the Trinity, Bernard focused on what he considered to be Abelard's deficient understanding of redemption. In its place he offered his own reflection on the core essentials of the Christian message, namely the extent of Christ's love offered through the cross.

Bernard closed the draft version of Letter 190 with a statement that there were other dangerous claims (*capitula*) made by Abelard to which he could not respond in the brevity of a letter but which he thought he would collect and transmit. While there is no list attached to this draft version of Letter 190, the list of 19 *capitula* attached to its final version seems to have been the product of a meeting between Bernard and William of Saint Thierry, as well as a third individual to whom Bernard must have entrusted the task of a separate reading of the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* and *liber sententiarum*.[68] The list of 19 *capitula* is in fact a conflation of William's list of 13 erroneous propositions and a list of 14, the so-called *Capitula Haeresum XIV*. A version intermediate to the final list of 19 survives with a slightly different sequence of propositions, independently of Letter 190, as an addition to a copy of Augustine's *De haeresibus* that might have originally come from the Cistercian abbey of Ourscamp. Quite possibly Ourscamp was where William and Bernard, together with the author of the *Capitula Haeresum XIV*, met up. Given that this manuscript also contains heretical propositions later attributed to Gilbert of Poitiers, drawn up by Geoffrey of Auxerre, it is quite possible that Geoffrey, a

[68] Constant Mews, "The lists of heresies imputed to Peter Abelard," *Revue bénédictine* 95 (1985), 77–108; repr. in Mews, *Abelard and His Legacy* (London, 2001).

former student of Peter Abelard converted to the Cistercians by Bernard's preaching in Paris in November 1140, attended this meeting. The *Capitula Haeresum XIV* offers a particularly intelligent selection of controversial extracts from the *Theologia* and *liber sententiarum*. In particular, its author did not find any passage specifically reporting the claim that Abelard taught that the Father was full omnipotence, the Son a certain power, and the Holy Spirit no power at all. Instead, he observed that the image of the Trinity as having three properties like a bronze seal was "to be abhorred."[69] The internal order of the *Capitula Haeresum XIV* suggests that it may originally have comprised 13 propositions taken down in sequence from the *Theologia* and then the *liber sententiarum*, but that it then had a fourteenth added to it, that omnipotence was attributed properly to the Father alone. This was a more precise version of the accusation originally made at Soissons and the core argument made by William of Saint Thierry, repeated as such by Bernard in Letter 190 even before the list had been drawn up. The author of the *Capitula Haeresum XIV* may have originally been asked to identify 13 heretical propositions from the two texts supplied (and presumably annotated) by William of Saint Thierry. Because Bernard had already repeated what William of Saint Thierry had reported of Abelard's teaching on the Trinity, the author of the *Capitula Haeresum XIV* may have felt obliged to add evidence for a comparable heretical proposition. The wording of the heretical propositions in this list is always more careful. It suggests that Bernard had engaged a learned scholar to assist him in drawing up this list. This may have been after Bernard had prepared the initial draft of Letter 190.

Because the *Capitula Haeresum XIV* makes certain claims about Abelard's teaching on divine will never made by Bernard, but discussed at length in the *Disputatio catholicorum patrum contra Petrum Abaelardum*, written to answer Abelard's *Apologia* against Bernard, it is very likely that the same scholarly adviser was involved. This was Thomas of Morigny, a Benedictine monk, who would have met both Abelard and Bernard at Morigny in 1131. In 1140 Thomas had been expelled from his abbey and was residing at Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris. He was someone clearly familiar with the format of scholastic

[69] *The Capitula Haeresum XIV* was edited by E.-M. Buytaert, CCCM 12:473–80, but again by N. Häring, "Die Vierzehn Capitula Haeresum Petri Abaelardi," *Cîteaux* 31 (1980), 35–52.

disputation, able to show how Abelard's arguments so often departed from the authority of tradition. Although Otto of Freising would later claim that Abelard wrote his *Apologia* against Bernard after the Council of Sens, the fact that it contains no reference to the Council argues against this. The debate between Abelard and Bernard was, in one sense, the extension of a scholastic dispute. The rules of debate, however—at least as they were developing in the Parisian schools—were being ignored. Abelard treated Bernard as ignorant of dialectical procedure, while the abbot viewed his adversary as a dangerous critic of tradition, intent on questioning for its own sake.

Abelard initially provided small additions to the *Theologia* to support his argument of contested passages but made a more radical revision of the controversial section about the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit in a version preserved through emendations made to a 14th-century copy (Oxford, Balliol College 296) of the *Theologia 'Scholarium*.'[70] Exactly when Abelard produced this more significant revision of the *Theologia* is not certain. In it he certainly responds to Bernard of Clairvaux, accusing him of being ignorant of the force of the meaning of words in discussion of Trinity. The claim highlights the central difference between the two men. Bernard was simply not interested in the critique of theological language, a procedure which Abelard had initially absorbed from the theological *sententie* of William of Champeaux but had extended in a new direction through his own thinking about the nature of language and that to which it referred. Bernard of Clairvaux had no particular expertise in such a discussion of words. His memory of William of Champeaux was shaped by a very different experience, that of reading the Fathers during those early years at Clairvaux. William's interest in the theory of rhetoric was not as important as the craft of recognising the capacity of rhetoric to move the soul closer to God. Bernard offered an existential reading of Scripture as relevant to the spiritual journey of the soul, while Abelard offered reflection on the meaning of words used about God as a Trinity and about Christ as the manifestation of God's love for humanity.

The confrontation at Sens, desired by Abelard as a disputation in which he could defend himself against the accusations made by

[70] See my discussion of this manuscript, CCCM 13:248–62 and 277–90 (in which I assumed the Council took place in 1140).

Bernard, effectively became a judicial procedure engaged in examining the controversial *capitula* that Bernard had identified. According to Berengar of Poitiers, Bernard met the bishops assembled at Sens on the eve of the Council and persuaded them all to condemn Abelard in his absence. In Berengar's eyes, this was a serious breach of procedure in that Abelard was not able to put forth his side of the story. Yet, as Wim Verbaal has argued, one can argue that Bernard (who had initially been very hesitant about coming to the Council but was persuaded to do so by certain unnamed powerful figures) did, in fact, follow due procedure.[71] Exactly who persuaded Bernard to attend is not certain, but it could well have been senior royal advisers like Suger of Saint Denis and Joscelin of Soissons. Samson, the newly appointed archbishop of Reims, prevented from taking possession of the city until after August 1140, would also have strongly urged Bernard to attend to support the cause of Reims. The Council proper, attended by the king of France, major nobles, and all the major bishops, convened the following day after Bernard had delivered a sermon. Abelard—aware of the hostile attitude of the majority of bishops—announced to the assembly that he was refusing to testify to that assembly but would take his case to Rome. Whether this was indeed canonical was uncertain, as normally it was only a bishop who had such a right. Abelard may have taken advice from Cardinal Hyacinth Bobbone, who was aware that there were many cardinals in Rome critical of Bernard's behaviour (or so John of Salisbury reports was the case in 1148).[72] Bernard then worked quickly to write a report of the Council for Innocent II and a host of other letters to his leading cardinals to forestall Abelard's journey to Rome. These letters had their desired effect. On 16 July 1141, Pope Innocent II issued an edict excommunicating Abelard for heresy. In a codicil, he advised that Abelard and Arnold of Brescia should be held in captivity and their writings burned.

This burning never took place. We know from the letters of Peter the Venerable that Abelard had stopped at Cluny en route to Rome, and that the abbots of Cluny and Cîteaux had negotiated a truce between Bernard and Abelard. Abelard revised certain controversial passages

---

[71] The *Apologia* of Berengar richly deserves to be translated; ed. Rodney M. Thomson, "The Satirical Works of Berengar of Poitiers: An Edition with Introduction," *Mediaeval Studies* 42 (1980): 89–138. See Verbaal, *Een middeleeuws drama* (note 1 above).

[72] *Historia pontificalis*, ed. Chibnall, pp. 19–20.

of his *Theologia*, while Bernard agreed not to continue with his public campaign. It is quite possible that the major revisions introduced by Abelard in the version preserved in Balliol 296 were made at this time. They demonstrated his continuing anger at the misinterpretation of his arguments by adversaries but eliminated a few particularly controversial phrases that had been raised in the polemical literature. In a sense, this was standard procedure in scholastic debate, to question someone's arguments and perhaps revise statements that had been awkwardly expressed. Here, however, the disputation had turned into a political battle, with the two leading protagonists presented as engaged in a duel.

The sentence of excommunication was eventually lifted after Peter the Venerable informed Pope Innocent II what had happened.[73] But because this sentence was never reported in registers of Bernard's correspondence, the image of Abelard circulated to readers of Bernard's correspondence was that of the stubborn heretic who refused to revise his ideas, and was still peddling sophistries in both dialectic and theology. Geoffrey of Auxerre, the secretary who kept the correspondence relating to the affair, had a vested interest in preserving this image of Abelard during the time of Bernard's arguments with Gilbert of Poitiers. Admirers of Bernard wanted to see their hero defend orthodoxy and the authority of monasticism as they knew it over teachers in the schools. This was a very crude analysis of the situation, giving no recognition to the subtle range of theological positions being developed in the schools of Paris. There were many monks who were keenly interested in the theological writings emerging from the schools. Bernard of Clairvaux did not have a monopoly on the religious culture of monasticism, even within the monastic order. But then neither did Abelard have a monopoly on the range of theological ideas being discussed within the schools. For all the desire of Bernard's admirers to see his authority promoted within the Church and over errant teachers in Paris and elsewhere, it would be impossible ever to limit the diversity of reflection with the vast range of communities and religious houses that made up Latin Christendom.

---

[73] The information is known only from Peter's little-circulated Ep. 98, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, ed. Giles Constable, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 258–259.

BERNARD AS A FATHER ABBOT

Christopher Holdsworth

The aim of this paper is to address one aspect of Bernard's life, namely, the relationship between him as abbot of Clairvaux and his ever increasing monastic family.[1] When he became abbot of the newly founded monastery in 1115, he was the leader of a single community with, perhaps, as many as two dozen members. But when he died in 1153, Clairvaux itself, according to Geoffrey of Auxerre, held 700 people, of whom around 200 were monks, implying the rest were lay brothers, whom Geoffrey said were far more numerous than the monks. As for the houses attached to Clairvaux, or houses founded by it, Geoffrey estimated them at around 160, that is to say more than half of all the Cistercian houses then existing, and a larger family than that attached to any other house.[2] Bernard's responsibilities centred on houses founded by Clairvaux itself, or which had become affiliated to it. My own estimate is that by 1153 there were around 63 such daughters, of which probably 23 were affiliated. Even so, Bernard's task in applying the Rule of Saint Benedict and the developing customs of his Order to this huge family was enormous, since the daughter houses were spreading over most of western Europe: geographic France, Italy, Spain, the Empire, Scandinavia, Britain, and Ireland. So the general

---

[1] This paper grew out of a short one given at the International Conference of Medievalists at Leeds, 2007. André Louf, "Bernard abbé," in *Bernard de Clairvaux: histoire, mentalités, spiritualité* (Bernard de Clairvaux, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1: *Introduction générale*, Sources Chrétiennes, 380) (Paris, 1992), pp. 348–379, covers some of the same ground. [Sources Chrétiennes abbreviated henceforth as SChr].

[2] *Vita Prima* [abbreviated henceforth as VP], 3.ii.18 and 3.iii.20; J.-P. Migne, PL 185:225–416. Geoffrey has more than 160 ("quoque amplius quam centum sexaginta monasteriorum," col. 360, and "centum sexaginta," col. 363). The number of monks at Clairvaux is not included in VP, but in his preliminary draft, Adriaan Bredero states that after Bernard's death, 888 monastic professions ("libelli professionum") were found in the monastery, apart from many others which had perished or been lost; see Bredero, "Un brouillon du XIIe siècle: L'autographe de Geoffrey d'Auxerre," *Scriptorium* 13 (1959), 27–60, at 44. Benedict of Nursia calls them "petitions"; see *The Rule of St Benedict*, cap. 58.19–20, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, 1981), p. 268. For sizes of Cistercian "families," see René Locatelli, "L'expansion de l'ordre cistercien," in *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 1 above), p. 122.

question is how did Bernard keep up with this fast growth of his family, unparalleled in earlier monastic history, as he attempted to fulfil his duties?

The single most significant body of evidence enabling us to answer that question is his letters. These survive, it is worth noticing, in far more manuscripts than those of his contemporaries, such as Anselm, successively abbot of Bec and archbishop of Canterbury, or Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny. Father Schmitt, editor of Anselm's letters, used ten manuscripts, while Giles Constable, editor of Peter's, used merely six. Jean Leclercq, the indefatigable editor of Bernard's works, consulted more than 100 manuscripts for the letters.[3] Such a huge survival testifies to the size of Bernard's monastic family, to the range of non-monastic matters with which he became involved, and to the enduring interest his letters had, not only within his own Order, or other communities of monks and nuns, but among a wider readership too.

Around 100 letters, about one-fifth of the total, address members of his own community at Clairvaux, and 25 of its daughter houses. This number only includes a few letters about two disputed elections at York and Langres, which involved some daughter houses but did not directly affect most of the Order. Of these 25 monasteries, 17 were new foundations made from Clairvaux; eight had become affiliated to it. I hope that these letters will provide a reasonably accurate impression of how Bernard might have reacted to problems occurring in other houses in his family, about which, at present, much less evidence is available.

The first of two tables at the end of this chapter is designed to show, first, which houses occur in the correspondence, and when they were founded. The second table arose as it seemed the letters fell into a series of discrete subjects, even though a few letters deal with more than one. This table is also arranged chronologically. It will be noted that despite the labours of generations of scholars, from the time of Mabillon onwards, to establish a convincing chronology for each letter, a significant number—seven—cannot be placed. But letters then, of course, were very rarely dated by those who sent them. Whereas the first table indicates how widely Bernard's letters were sent, with

[3] Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1987), p. 143.

substantial numbers going to geographical France, the Empire, Italy, Ireland, and England, the second shows that letters concerning Clairvaux and its family survive for every decade of Bernard's abbacy.

Usually I have followed the chronology provided in the relevant two volumes in the Italian edition of Bernard's works (based on Leclercq and Rochais' text, without most of their apparatus), because its notes are most informative.[4] Normally I use the English translation by Bruno Scott James, in Beverly Mayne Kienzle's edition, published in 1998.[5] Her introduction outlines some significant work done since the original edition of 1953, and elsewhere she creates useful tables relating the idiosyncratic numbering invented by James to the numbering used by Leclercq and Rochais (itself based on Mabillon, and followed in the Italian, German, and French editions), and she adopts the Italian edition's chronology.

All these versions follow the dating of letters written up to 1126 provided by Damien Van den Eynde over 40 years ago.[6] In 1994 I attempted to highlight some problems in his work and suggest some alternatives.[7] That paper appeared too late for use in either the Italian or German editions, and although the French volume lists it, that volume does not take issue with any of my arguments and continues to follow Van den Eynde. I shall note here those places where my suggested dates differ from those most widely accepted.

---

[4] *Opere di san Bernardo*, ed. Ferruccio Gastaldelli, vols 6.1 and 6. 2 (Milan, 1986), abbreviated henceforth as OSB with vol. and page; in *Bernhard von Clairvaux Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard B. Winkler, letters in vols 2 and 3 (Innsbruck, 1992), adopting the Italian notes translated en bloc; text reproducing *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–1977) (abbreviated henceforth as SBO), esp. vols 7, 8 (Rome, 1974, 1977). C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone. The French edition, using the text of SBO, began to appear in SChr in 1990, but only one volume of the letters exists, covering Epp. 1–41: intro. and notes Monique Duchet-Suchaux, trans. Henri Rochais, SChr 425 (Paris, 1997).

[5] *The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Bruno Scott James, intro. Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Stroud, 1998). Henceforward indicated by "J" before the number.

[6] Most easily found in Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1969), pp. 343–422.

[7] "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux" [abbreviated henceforth as "Early Writings"], *Cîteaux* 45 (1994), 21–61.

Recruitment

It is hardly surprising that the largest group of letters, 31, reveals Bernard's efforts to attract individuals into the form of Benedictine life which he had deliberately chosen when he joined Cîteaux, rather than any older monastic community with which his family had links. Letters aiming to attract, or less often to dissuade recruits, survive from very early in his abbacy until near its end. The earliest letter,[8] addressed to the prior of Clairvaux, commended to him a former shield-bearer of Thomas of Marle who wished to join the army of Christ rather than be a worldly soldier. The prior was to consult with some of the monks and, if they were in agreement, to accept the shield-bearer as a novice. It clearly comes from the time when the young abbot had fallen ill and been allowed by the then-small chapter of abbots to live away from his monastery under the care of William of Champeaux, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne. The accepted view is that this illness lasted from 1116 to 1117, whereas my own is that it fits better into the years 1119–20.[9] Bernard's last recruiting letter comes from some point between 1150 and his death in 1153.[10]

These letters fall into three groups: 11 about people whom Bernard was trying to persuade to enter Clairvaux or who, having entered, caused him to write to people affected by their decision. Then come 14 letters about people who had left, or might leave, another form of monasticism or other disciplined life for the Cistercian one, a process often called *transitus*. Lastly, six letters involve those who had tried, or in one case wanted to try, life at Clairvaux but whom Bernard thought were unsuited to it.

Possible or Actual Entrants to Clairvaux

Letters involving possible or actual entrants to Clairvaux survive for four men in England, three in Northern France, three in Flanders, and one group in Italy. The latter were potential entrants to a not-yet-founded daughter house near Milan.[11]

---

[8] Ep. 441; OSB 6.2, pp. 600–602; SBO 8, p. 419; J 460, pp. 517–518.
[9] "Early Writings," pp. 37–39.
[10] Ep. 112; OSB 6.1, pp. 532–534; SBO 7, pp. 286–287; J 114, pp. 171–172.
[11] For this last group. see text at note 100 below.

The number of Englishmen is striking. All lived in the north, and one might have supposed that such potential recruits would have been less likely to have contacts with Clairvaux than people living in France. But if one asks who might have influenced the choice of letters to be kept, then William, an Englishman who became Bernard's first secretary, seems the likely candidate. His time at Clairvaux ended in 1132, when he travelled north with the founding party to establish Rievaulx in Yorkshire.[12] William could well have made a small dossier of Bernard's letters, all written to people he knew, or certainly knew about, which could have been taken into the collection of letters mentioned as existing in 1146 by Geoffrey of Auxerre, then Bernard's secretary, in his *Fragmenta*.[13] One letter went to William's brother Ivo; another to Henry Murdac, a teacher in the schools in York who was known to both William and Ivo; two letters went to Thomas, provost of the community serving Beverley Minster; and one went to Alexander, bishop of Lincoln. Thomas became known to William soon after he returned north, since he witnessed the so-called foundation charter to Rievaulx itself, a composite document dating probably from the mid-1150s.[14]

But what encouragement did Bernard give in these "recruiting" letters? The message comes across most clearly in the letters to Henry Murdac and to bishop Alexander. Henry was assured that serving Christ would be more rewarding than reading about him. Henry was asked, "Why seek the Word amidst written words, when in the flesh he stands before your eyes?"[15] At Clairvaux "the clear water that springs from the fountains of the Saviour" would delight him. He would also feed on "the full ears of corn on which Jerusalem feasts," while Bernard himself would gladly share with him "the warm loaves which still piping hot, fresh, as it were from the oven, Christ of his heavenly bounty so often shares with his poor." From his own experience Bernard knew that Henry would "find much more labouring among

---

[12] See Ep. 92 at note 75 below.

[13] Robert Lechat, "Les fragmenta de Vita et Miraculis S. Bernardi," *Analecta Bollandiana* 50 (1932), 103. Ferruccio Gastaldelli, "Le più antiche testimonianze biografiche su San Bernardo, *Analecta Cisterciensia* 45 (1989), 4–80, at 9–11, argues for the *Fragmenta* existing in 1146. Adriaan Bredero, *Bernard de Clairvaux, Between Cult and History* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 26, asserts 1145.

[14] Janet Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069–1215* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 101, n. 14.

[15] Ep. 106; OSB 6.1, pp. 496–498, of 1128 (?); SBO 7, pp. 265–267; J 107, pp. 155–156.

the woods than you ever will amongst books," just as "Woods and stones will teach you what you can never hear from any master." Typically Bernard clothed his argument in biblical language; phrase after phrase echoed it, expecting that Murdac, as a teacher, would recognise most of the actual quotations without needing pointer phrases such as "as the Psalmist says."[16]

Likening life at Clairvaux to sharing bread meant a great deal to Bernard, since he made use of the image for a number of years. He used it in 1121/22 when writing to Romanus, "subdeacon of the Roman Curia," who was witnessing papal letters during these years.[17] Bernard addressed him as *carissime* and urged him to fulfil his wish to enter Clairvaux. He emphasised the need to hurry, with a sentence ultimately derived from Cicero's *De Senectute*: "Nothing is more certain for mortals than death, nothing more uncertain than the hour of death."[18] Romanus, a well-educated cleric, would surely have recognised the tag, though he and Bernard may have gotten it from an intermediary source rather than the book itself.[19] After dwelling on death's inescapability, Bernard invited him to "Come then make haste," finally promising, "And you can be sure, I shall be ready, according to the word of the Prophet, 'to bring out bread to you in flight'" (Isa. 21:14).[20]

This passage also occurs in two letters to Thomas of Beverley, both of which address Thomas in a way which may strike modern readers as over the top.[21] "I confess that what I have heard of you from those who know you, pleases me. I do not mean your noble lineage, your

---

[16] OSB 6.1, pp. 496–499, notes 20 biblical quotations or reminiscences; SBO 7, pp. 265–267; J pp. 155–156, marks some with inverted commas but identifies none.

[17] OSB 6.1; Ep. 105, pp. 494–497; SBO 7, pp. 264–265; J 106, pp. 155–156. Gastaldelli gives no date, being unaware of B. Zenker, *Die Mitglieder des Kardinalkollegiums von 1130–1159* (diss., University of Würzburg, 1964), pp. 152–153.

[18] *De Senectute* 20.74. "Nil mortalibus vel morte certius, vel incertius hora mortis." The same passage occurs slightly differently in Ep. 412 (J 443) to Thomas of Saint Omer, written a little before 1138: "nihil enim certius morte, nihil hora mortis incertius." OSB does not note either passage (cf. 6.1, p. 494, line 12; 6.2, p. 563, line 5), but Leclercq did in his "Lettres de Vocation à la vie monastique," in *Studia Anselmiana*, 37, *Analecta Monastica*, 3rd ser., ed. M.M. Lebreton, J. Leclercq, and C.H. Talbot (Rome, 1955), p. 174, n. 9. He also noted its occurrence in Ep. 105, although he failed to note it in SBO 7, p. 264, or 8, p. 394.

[19] Leclercq makes some suggestions. See the previous note.

[20] The passage also occurs in his letters to Robert and Geoffrey of Peronne, Epp. 1 and 109, J 1 and 111, of spring 1125 and 1131, for which see at notes 26 and 30 below.

[21] Epp. 107, 411; OSB 6.1, pp. 500–514, dated shortly before 1131; OSB 6.2, pp. 556–560; SBO 7, pp. 267–276, and 8, 392–394; J 109, 108, pp. 158–165, 156–158.

courtly bearing, your handsome figure, your riches, or your exalted rank." Here we have the use of the rhetorical device of *praeteritio*, in which an author, after saying he is not going to discuss various things, does just that to emphasise them. Bernard goes on to make the point again in a slightly different way: "All these and the like are mortal things and will fade like flowers of the field. I refer to your strong character, your noble demeanour, and especially to that love of holy poverty, which, I am told, you have lately conceived amidst your riches."[22] For all this flattery, Thomas did not enter Clairvaux, and four years later died very suddenly, which revealed him as a "double child of hell," since he was still a secular, and one "in bad faith."[23]

Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, received a letter, probably in 1129, not because he wanted to enter Clairvaux but because one of the clerks in his household had done so, when supposedly travelling to Jerusalem.[24] Bernard went straight to the point, writing immediately after the address: "I write to tell you that your Philip has found a short cut to Jerusalem and has arrived there very quickly. He crossed the ocean stretching wide on every hand with a favourable wind in a very short time, and he has now cast anchor on the shores for which he was making." After a dozen lines hinting at what that meant, he suddenly added "and this, if you want to know is Clairvaux." That place, not the earthly Jerusalem, is "united to the one in heaven by wholehearted devotion, by conformity of life, and by a certain spiritual affinity. Here, so Philip promises himself, will be his rest for ever and ever."

The progress from journeying to resting is accomplished with few words and in a striking manner. But, and this is found elsewhere in Bernard's letters, he then moved on to two very practical issues consequent upon Philip's decision: that the income from his prebend should be paid to his creditors until his debts were satisfied; and that Philip's mother might be allowed to have a life tenancy of the house which he had built and lived in on Church land. These requests throw a rare light on the kind of problems which might arise when a cleric became

---

Ep. 107 in the main *corpus* is much longer than 411, *extra corpus*, and may be a revised version of 411. I quote here Ep. 107.1.

[22] Cf. Ep. 104.1; OSB 6.1, pp. 488–489; SBO 7, p. 261; J 105, p. 152, an undated letter to Walter of Chaumont, who has "noble bearing… noble birth, a lithe body, a comely appearance, a distinguished bearing."

[23] See at note 58 below.

[24] Ep. 64; OSB 6.1, pp. 292–294, dated 1129; SBO 7, pp. 157–158; J 67, pp. 90–92.

a monk, especially if he had not given his superior, in this case the bishop, any warning of what was in his mind before setting out.

It is impossible to know how Alexander reacted, especially to Bernard's last paragraph which exhorted him, who was to receive the soubriquet of "the Magnificent," not to think that worldly glory does not end and advised him to prepare for death. One may suppose that he probably did as he was asked, since we know that in 1137 he founded a daughter house of Fountains at Haverholme within his diocese.[25]

Another letter to the young Geoffrey of Péronne and his friends involved people won over by hearing Bernard as he travelled through Flanders with Pope Innocent II in 1131 to meet the emperor Lothar.[26] They were told that their "conversion" had impressed many and indeed rejoiced the whole Church. Bernard expressed the effect with a startling image: "Like a tree in spring the cross has burst into flower, the cross on which the Lord of glory hung not only for the Gentiles, but also for the scattered people of God." Not surprisingly he urged them to put their conversion into effect, promising that should they approach him he would do all that he could to help. Geoffrey and his friends did in fact enter Clairvaux, and the distress this caused his parents moved Bernard to write one of his most deeply felt letters.[27]

He assured Geoffrey's parents that "All of us at Clairvaux or of Clairvaux will receive him as a brother and you as parents." The phrase "In Claravalle vel de Claravalle" suggests that all houses associated with Clairvaux would welcome him. Finally Bernard reassured them should their son be affected by the harsh life: "Have comfort, do not worry. I will look after him like a father and he will be a son until the Father of Mercies… shall receive him from my hands"; and again, "I will be for him both a mother and a father, both a brother and a sister," words derived from Jesus' words "Who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:50).

Another undated letter of consolation written as from a monk called Elias to his parents leaves a more disturbing impression.[28] It belongs

---

[25] David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales* (London, 1971), pp. 120, 194–195. Building started then; when monks arrived in 1139 they disliked the site, so Alexander moved them to Louth Park and gave Haverholme to the Gilbertines.

[26] Ep. 109; OSB 6.1, pp. 522–524; SBO 7, pp. 280–282; J 111, pp. 167–168.

[27] Ep. 110; OSB 6.1, pp. 526–527, also 1131; SBO 7, pp. 282–283; J 112, p. 169.

[28] Ep. 111; OSB 6.1, pp. 528–532, undated; SBO 7, pp. 283–285; J 113, pp. 169–171. The genre is discussed in French edition of Letters, SChr 425, pp. 29–30.

to a genre in which an author wrote not in his own person or character but on behalf of someone else. Bernard denounced their efforts to persuade Elias to return home, calling them "not my parents, but my enemies," and later asked "Unhappy parents, are you not content with having unhappily brought me into this unhappy world? Sinners are you not satisfied that by your sin you have given birth to a sinner?" Some modern readers have been sufficiently embarrassed that they now prefer to attribute it to one of Bernard's secretaries rather than to the abbot himself. This is conceivable, especially if it were written at a period when he was absent from Clairvaux, or late in his life when there is evidence that he did not always have time to read through a secretary's draft.[29]

Monks or Canons Wishing to Exchange their Present Community for Clairvaux

The 14 letters concerning monks or canons wishing to exchange their present community for Clairvaux include what is arguably Bernard's most famous letter, addressed to his cousin Robert, now usually dated to the spring of 1125.[30] We shall see that most letters about a change of community date between then and around 1131. Only three letters are later.

The earliest letter about a change from one form of disciplined life to another involved not a monk but a group of canons following the Rule of Saint Augustine.[31] Bernard addressed their old community very humbly, a tone he did not always take with aggrieved communities. He claimed to have accepted the canons "on the advice and encouragement of many illustrious persons and especially of that very distinguished man William, Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne," who had all "begged us with many prayers and supplications to receive them at Clairvaux." He also assured them that if during their probationary year any canons decided to return to their old way of life he would not keep them against their will. Only with his final sentence did another

[29] Ep. 381 to Peter the Venerable, dated June/July 1149; OSB 6.2, pp. 496–498; SBO 8, pp. 345–346; J 308, pp. 378–379.

[30] Ep. 1; OSB 6.1, pp. 4–24, dated 1125; SBO 7, pp. 1–11; J 1, pp. 1–10. My own view, "Early Writings," pp. 39–56, suggested that 1121 fits the circumstances better.

[31] Ep. 3; OSB 6.1, pp. 46–48, dated 1120, the year bishop William died; SBO 7, pp. 23–24; J 3, pp. 18–19. There is no clarity about where this community was, save probably in William's diocese.

side of Bernard emerge: "And so, most holy brothers, it would ill-become you vainly to attempt to hamper the liberty of spirit which is theirs by any ill-considered anathema, unless perhaps (which God forbid) it is your own interests and not the glory of Jesus Christ you are trying to promote."

Monks wanting a change of life were no new phenomenon. Indeed, Benedict devoted a whole chapter of his Rule to them, somewhat misleadingly entitled "The Reception of Visiting Monks."[32] Its second paragraph dealt with the circumstances in which it was permissible to accept a visitor who wished to remain permanently. Broadly speaking, the visitor who had behaved himself might be permitted to stay, but if he had not, he would not be permitted to stay. A final paragraph, however, warned an abbot never to accept a monk "from another known monastery" (*de alio noto monasterio*) unless the abbot there had consented and sent a letter of recommendation. The principle here was derived from Tobit 4:16, quoted at the end of the chapter: "Never do to another what you do not want done to yourself." How far did Bernard keep to that guideline?

Bernard's letter to Robert discloses a complex story. While still young, Robert, a cousin of whom he was very fond, entered Clairvaux even though he had been given to Cluny as a child by his parents. Bernard had made him wait two years or so before admitting him, and then, some time later, during Bernard's absence, Robert was persuaded by the prior of Cluny to return there. In another letter Bernard claimed he had kept quiet about Robert's departure, but finally a combination of circumstances impelled him to write.[33] This letter turned into a long and passionate tour de force appealing to Robert to return. It displays all Bernard's literary skills: some passages were coloured with biblical phrases, like the slightly later letter to Murdac already discussed;[34] while others were almost bare of them; short and straightforward sentences give the impression of spontaneous speech rather than writing. The opening paragraph, for example, has only one obvious quotation at its end, when imagining what Bernard would do if Robert returned. He looked forward to joyfully singing "he who was dead has come to life again, was lost is found"—the words which Jesus

[32] *Rule*, cap. 61, ed. Fry, pp. 274–276. A.M. Dimier, "Saint Bernard et le droit en matière de *transitus*," *Revue Mabillon* 48 (1953), 48–83, is still useful.

[33] Ep. 32.3; OSB 6.1, p. 164, of Sept/Oct. 1124: SBO 7, pp. 87–88; J 33, p. 66.

[34] See text following note 15 above.

attributed to the father when his prodigal son returned (Luke 15:32). The same passage occurs in one of his two letters to Thomas of Beverley, and in another early letter trying to persuade a cleric called Fulk to go back to the canonical community which he had left, as well as in his last letter sent to a possible recruit.[35] In each case the words come at a significant place: once at the end of the first paragraph, twice at the very end of the letter. Bernard never gives the passage its place in the Bible or highlights it with words like "As Luke tells us," presumably expecting his readers to easily recognise it.[36]

But two points should be made before we move on. First, the letter had its effect, if not immediately. Robert was back at Clairvaux, at an unknown date, but in time for Bernard to appoint him in 1136 as first abbot for a foundation at Noirlac, from whence he returned to Clairvaux to die in 1190.[37] Second, there survives a story told at Clairvaux, which made its way into the *First Life* of Bernard, about the circumstances around its writing. Bernard was portrayed there dictating to his secretary out of doors, where a sudden storm caught them, yet they and the draft stayed dry.[38]

Robert's wanderings seem to have involved breaching the Rule. Bernard could scarcely have claimed when he took Robert in that Cluny was not known to him. Similarly when the prior of Cluny removed Robert during Bernard's absence, he too knew Clairvaux, and acted without the permission of Robert's then-abbot. They both, however, used the fact that Robert had originally been given to Cluny, and was not an adult entrant to the abbey, as a pretext, though differently. Bernard claimed an oblate should be allowed to make up his own mind, whereas the prior held that oblates were just as bound to their house as adults. Two other cases of *transitus* involved breaching the Rule.

---

[35] Epp. 411, 2, and 112; OSB 6.2, pp. 556–560; OSB 6.1, pp. 26–44; pp. 532–534, dated pre-1131, *c.*1120, 1150–1153: J 108, 2, and 114, pp. 156–158, 10–18, 171–172; SBO 8, pp. 392–394, and SBO 7, pp. 286–287.

[36] Cf. a much longer passage at the end of first paragraph of Ep. 1 modelled on 1 Cor. 13: 4–6, printed side by side in my "Bernard: Chimera of his Age" in *Essays in Honor of Edward B. King*, ed. Robert G. Benson and Eric W. Naylor (Sewanee, 1991), pp. 157–158.

[37] OSB 6.1, pp. 4–5, n. 1.

[38] VP 1.xi.50; PL 185:256A. Odo of Cluny and Maiol, his successor, each had not dissimilar experiences of keeping dry in a storm; see L.M. Smith, *The Early History of the Monastery of Cluny* (Oxford, 1920), pp. 78–79, citing the Anonymous Life of John the Monk, *Vita Odonis,* 2.22; PL 133:72–73.

The desire of Drogo, a monk at Benedictine Saint Nicaise in Rheims, to leave and enter Cistercian life without his abbot's permission resulted in three letters.[39] Bernard became involved not because Drogo wished to enter Clairvaux (he went to Pontigny) but because Drogo's abbot complained to him, presumably believing that Bernard had some share in what had happened. That Bernard hotly denied: "I would certainly never have advised Brother Drogo to leave you, if he had consulted me on the matter; I would certainly never have received him here, if he had come to me after leaving you."[40] He also told Joran-nus that he had written to the abbot of Pontigny, but finally suggested that if Drogo could not be persuaded to return home, his former abbot should accept this as God's will and not "kick against the ruling of heaven, which could not be undone." To round that argument off he appealed to an old story of an abbot who had refused to attempt to recall a monk who had left his monastery for another because "wherever he is, if he is good he is still mine."[41]

The remaining letters, to Hugh of Pontigny and Drogo himself, reveal that Bernard seems to have been somewhat economical with the truth. Hugh's letter shows that Bernard had written to him before, and that Hugh had misunderstood him. Bernard claimed to have warned Hugh that serious consequences might follow if he took Drogo in, "But I had no intention of trying to persuade or advise you, still less did I mean, as you said I did, that the monk ought to be returned to his monastery." After all, he had known Drogo wanted to become a Cistercian for "a long time" and confessed, "I ought rather to congratulate him than urge his return." But appeals from the abbot of Saint Nicaise, "with whom I am very intimate," and also from the archbishop of Rheims, had moved him to write again to Hugh. His aim was "to clear myself of any suspicion of complicity in the affair and to warn you of the abuse you might incur by your action, while at the same time satisfying them." Hugh should have "read between the lines." Finally he

[39] Epp. 32–34; OSB 6.1, pp. 162–172, dated September/October 1124; SBO 7, pp. 86–91. My "Early Writings," p. 59, suggests probably 1121; see also J 33–35, pp. 65–69.

[40] Ep. 33.1, p. 162; SBO 7, pp. 88–89; J 33, pp. 65–66.

[41] Ep. 33.2, p. 164; SBO 7, p. 89; J 33, p. 66. The source is not identified, but the sentiment occurs in Ep 65.2; see note 54 below.

claimed he had given "a covert hint" that he "had written what I did under pressure to satisfy, not to say hoodwink, others."[42]

Bernard's second paragraph reveals another reason for writing as he did to both Drogo's old abbot and Hugh. First he denied that he had ever sent a messenger to Drogo (presumably when he was still at Rheims) to assure him that if he went to Clairvaux Bernard would secretly obtain a dispensation from Rome. "Is it likely," he asked, "that I would boast or even hope that I could receive a monk from a monastery which is well-known to me (*de notissimo mihi monasterio*) whom I do not think even you can keep without giving great offence?"[43]

The allusion here is to chapter 61.13–14 of the Rule, summarised above, and it certainly explains why Bernard wrote with some circumspection to Drogo's abbot.[44] His letter to Drogo, safely arrived at Pontigny, in contrast, was much more open, congratulating him for the change he had made even though it had, as he put it, "scandalised the Pharisees."[45] It is revealing that within the year Drogo was back at Saint Nicaise, to become abbot of the monastery of Saint John at Laon in 1128, whence Innocent chose him as cardinal bishop of Ostia in 1136.[46] He was clearly a competent man, even though one who changed his mind twice about where he wanted to be a monk.

Around this time, Bernard accepted a man called William at Clairvaux, who proved to be in some manner subject to the elderly bishop Ricuin of Toul.[47] To him Bernard wrote a brief apology, saying he had done what the bishop had asked, presumably meaning that he had sent him back to Toul.

The departure of the monk Benedict from the Benedictine monastery of Saint Germer at Flay in the diocese of Beauvais saw each side appealing to the same chapter of the Rule.[48] Here only Bernard's letters survive, but they mention some of the arguments used at Flay so that he could refute them. The abbot had apparently cited the Rule,

---

[42] Ep. 33.1; OSB 6.1, p. 168; SBO 7, p. 89; J 34, p. 67: "Cum itaque hoc in fine dixi, quid aliud vobis quam illa superiora dispensatorie, ut non dicam simulatorie, a me ita scripta fuisse latenter intimavi?" Similar words occur in Ep. 65.1; see note 52 below.

[43] Ep. 33.2, p. 168; SBO 7, p. 89; J 34, p. 67.

[44] Cf. at note 32 above.

[45] Ep. 34.2; OSB 6.1, p. 170; SBO 7, p. 91; J 35, p. 69.

[46] See n. 1 to Ep. 32 in OSB 6.1, p. 163.

[47] Ep. 396; OSB 6.2, pp. 324–326, dated before February 1124; SBO 8, p. 396; J 428, pp. 497–498.

[48] Epp. 67–68; OSB 6.1, pp. 304–314, dated 1125–26; SBO 7, pp. 163–167; J 70–71, pp. 95–99.

"taking it for granted that your monastery is well-known," but Bernard retorted "Your monastery may be well-known, but not to us." The fame of Flay might even have reached Rome, but "It may to you seem surprising, but it is none the less a fact, that we have not the slightest knowledge of anyone of you, an abbot or monks, or even of your neighbourhood. And this is nothing to be wondered at seeing that we are separated by great distances, different provinces, and another language." For Bernard, reducing the other abbot's argument to absurdity, if the Rule meant "that a monk could not be received from any monastery that was known to anyone then, as there is no monastery that is not known to someone, there would be no monastery left from which we should lawfully receive anyone." And was not the Rule itself inconsistent, he wondered, since earlier, in the same chapter of the Rule, it laid down that "a stranger monk" should be allowed to stay in the guest house as long as he wished, and that if he were suitable he could be "persuaded to join the new monastery?"[49]

This kind of logic-chopping, one might suppose, must have been offensive at Flay, but Bernard's second paragraph in his first letter seems to make a more valid point. Brother Benedict had come to Clairvaux, asked to be admitted, and been rejected and advised to go home. But instead of doing that, he had lived quietly as a hermit for seven months; then, finding that he was not suited to a solitary life, he had returned to Clairvaux and again asked to be admitted. Again they advised returning home, but when they asked what had induced him to leave Flay, he claimed that his abbot had insisted on his working as doctor to "tyrants, robbers and excommunicated persons," something from which his abbot would not release him. It was this, Bernard claimed, that had moved him to admit Benedict.[50]

Bernard's second letter put the arguments of his first in an even stronger manner, and also answered an argument put at Flay, based on the quotation from Tobit found in the Rule cited earlier: "and what is it that I have done to you which I would not tolerate others doing to myself?"[51] To this he replied, "You believe it is that I would not want a monk who had left my monastery to be received into another." And then continuing, "I can only say that I wish all those committed to

[49] Ep. 67.1: OSB 6.1, pp. 304–306; SBO 7, pp. 163–164; J 70, pp. 95–96.
[50] Ep. 67.2; OSB 6.1, pp. 306–308; SBO 7, pp. 164–165; J 70, p. 96.
[51] Ep. 68.3: OSB 6.1, pp. 310–312; SBO 7, p. 167; J 71, p. 98.

my care could be received by you and saved without me." He even went on to claim that if one of his monks asked to leave Clairvaux "for the sake of greater perfection of a stricter form of life," he would not complain if the abbot of Flay would take him in; indeed, "I would beg him to do so."

Two or three years after Bernard had tried to smooth over ruffled feelings at Flay, he became involved with another case of *transitus* involving someone who had in fact died at Clairvaux but was claimed by another monastery as one of theirs.[52] That abbey, Anchin, was an old foundation in the diocese of Arras, and Bernard's first letter addressed to its abbot, Alvisus, discloses that one of his monks, Godwin, had moved to Clairvaux, been accepted into the community, and later died there. This had brought to an end a period during which his first abbot had tried to force him back to Anchin with threats, both by letter and in person. Now Bernard wrote to congratulate the offended abbot for changing his tone as soon as he had heard of Godwin's death. The terms in which he did so echo a phrase in Bernard's letter to Hugh of Pontigny, already mentioned. Bernard praised the abbot for putting away all signs of his anger "as if they had been mere masks put on for the time to hide the true goodness and kindness of your nature."[53] To comfort Alvisus, he developed another idea he had used before, namely, that even though Godwin had left Anchin he had not ceased to be "his."[54]

Then Bernard moved on to ask whether the abbot could forgive Bernard for having accepted Godwin. In extenuation he pleaded that he had tried to persuade Godwin to return to his former home and that only when his efforts failed had he agreed to accept him. The argument does not seem to have convinced Bernard himself as an entirely adequate one, since he went on to describe his own willingness to scourge himself: "How often with naked shoulders and scourge ready in my hands, prepared as if at your command to punish myself, I implore your forgiveness, and anxiously await your pardon."[55]

---

[52] Epp. 65–66; OSB 6.1, pp. 296–302, dated 1129–31; SBO 7, pp. 159–162; J 68–69, pp. 92–95.

[53] Ep. 65.1; OSB 6.1, p. 296; SBO 7, p. 159; J 68, p. 92: "quae simulatoria, sed dispensatoria, ac per hoc transitoria"; see at note 42 above.

[54] See at note 41 above.

[55] Ep. 65.3–4; OSB 6.1, pp. 298–299; SBO 7, p. 162; J 68, pp. 93–94.

It is hard to know how literally one should read this passage, but it surely shows a Bernard with guilty feelings about what he had done and offering one way of showing his distress, self-punishment, which was part of the Rule and monastic life at that time. The letter Bernard wrote to the abbot of Saint Médard asking him to forward his letter to Alvisus also betrayed his disquiet. First he mentioned how much "the living word is better than the written word" and asked the abbot to "do what you can to remove this offence to the 'Kingdom of God.' "[56]

About a decade later another problem arose which came to involve the former abbot Alvisus, by then bishop of Arras.[57] A monk at Saint Bertin, within his diocese, Thomas of Saint Omer, had promised Bernard, in the presence of a witness, that he would join the Cistercians at Clairvaux. The first evidence is a letter to him from Bernard lamenting his failure, which apparently was connected with his involvement with a school of some kind. So Bernard addressed him very much as he had Murdac: "You deceive yourself, my son, if you think that you can learn from the masters of this world what is a gift from God… This is a knowledge imparted not by books but by grace; not by the letter but by the Spirit; not by mere book learning but by the practice of the commandments of God."[58] To underline the dangers Thomas faced if he delayed, Bernard recalled the fate of Thomas of Beverley, whose sudden death he stigmatised in scathing terms.[59]

This time Bernard's letter worked: Thomas did enter Clairvaux, but arguments arose about whether Bernard was right to accept him. These involved Leonius, abbot of Anchin, and Bishop Alvisus, asked by Leonius to intervene after his own efforts had failed. Bernard's letters to both men reveal some embarrassment, because he admitted that the abbot and his community had helped him and Clairvaux "generously, cheerfully and serenely."[60] Because of this he addressed Leonius and

---

[56] Ep. 66; OSB 6.1, p. 302: J 69, p. 94.

[57] Epp. 108, 382, 395; OSB 6.1, pp. 516–520; OSB 6.2, pp. 482–486, 522–524; SBO 7, pp. 277–279; SBO 8, pp. 346–348 and 370–371; J 110, 419, 420, pp. 165–167, 487–488—the first dated 1138 and the others 1138/45. For 1138, the supposed date Thomas entered Clairvaux, see SBO 7, p. 277, where no evidence is offered. In all cases the latter terminus is the death of Abbot Leonius, for which no source is given. These datings may need reconsideration.

[58] Ep. 108.2; OSB 6.1, p. 518; SBO 8, p. 278; J 110, p. 166.

[59] Ep. 108.3; OSB 6.1, pp. 518–520; SBO 8, pp. 278–279; J 110, pp. 166–167; see Thomas of Beverley at note 21 above.

[60] No suggestions have been made about what these kindnesses were; the words are very like those in Epp. 383–384, which are usually associated with the foundation of Clairmarais, a daughter of Clairvaux, in 1140. See note 108 below.

his community in warm terms: Leonius is his "dear," *dilectus*, while the abbot and his community are "dearest brothers," *dilectissimi*.[61] Indeed a whole paragraph is spent assuring them of his love, before he moves to justify, at twice the length, his acceptance of Thomas. He first argued that he could not send Thomas back to them, because he had been called by God, and such a call could not be denied. Then he presented a consideration he had used in his letter to Robert: namely, that the decision made by a mature person had more force than a promise made on his behalf by parents.[62]

To bishop Alvisus, he repeated largely the same point about Thomas having received and responded to a divine call, asking "Who am I to set myself up against the spirit of God, and hinder him, when he calls his own sheep by names and goes ahead of them himself so that they shall follow no other but himself? Thomas has chosen to be poor, and are you asking me to send him back to live at ease in riches?"[63] He expressed surprise that Alvisus could have thought that Bernard would be willing to try to dissuade Thomas away from the new life which he had chosen. Finally he said that if anyone did try to persuade Thomas to break his vow, they would have to answer to Bernard "before the Tribunal of Christ." When such sentiments reached Anchin and Arras, one can imagine that there may not have been much satisfaction.

Returning Individuals Back to their Original Monastery

Six letters survive, only two of which can be dated, showing Bernard returning individuals back to their original monastery. The earliest letter, dated to the decade 1121–31, raises a puzzling question.[64] It went to Rainard, abbot of Foigny, first abbot of the house and formerly a monk at Clairvaux. After apologising for writing briefly—the whole letter, including its address, occupies 11 lines—Bernard came "to the point" and explained that a young man from Rainard's part of the world had come to Clairvaux, "passing over you for some reason I cannot imagine." But, he continued, "As you know, I cannot receive him here," and so had persuaded him to return to Foigny, since he thought he might make a useful monk there, and asked Rainard to take him in.

---

[61] Ep. 382; OSB 6.2, pp. 482; SBO 8, pp. 346–348; J 419, p. 487.
[62] Ep. 382.3; OSB 6.2, p. 486; SBO 8, p. 348; J 419, p. 488.
[63] Ep. 395; OSB 6.2, p. 522; SBO 8, pp. 370–371; J 420.1, p. 489.
[64] Ep. 422; OSB 6.2, pp. 578–580; SBO 8, p. 406; J 453, p. 515.

Why could not Bernard do that? It might be because there were already as many novices at Clairvaux as could be housed there, though this seems rather improbable, at this stage in its history. Another possible explanation would be if there were some informal agreement between Cistercian abbots that they would not poach potential novices from the area around another monastery belonging to the Order. No trace of such an arrangement seems to exist, but we do know that not long after the time of this letter, around 1133–34, Cistercians did impose upon themselves regulations laying down a minimum distance between their own monasteries.[65]

Perhaps, however, a rather earlier chapter of the *Institutes* may have stronger claim to have affected the situation:

> *That no one may receive anyone wishing to go to a different church:* Should any monk, cleric, or layman wish to come to any of our churches in order to remain there, let no other church dissuade him, or retain him even if he wishes to remain, for it is written, "What you do not wish to be done to you, do not to another." If after he comes to that place where he proposes to live, should he change his mind and not wish to remain there, let him freely depart. But if he goes away after having lived in the novice's cell, whether expelled through his own fault, or whether upon his own initiative, let him not be received by an church of our fraternity without commendatory letters, because nourishment for discord can arise between churches from such a cause. We decree the same in the case of a monk from outside who has been received in any of our places, and has left in any way whatsoever.[66]

This chapter seems most likely to lie behind the cryptic terms of the present letter. The young man in question could not be accepted at Clairvaux because he had somehow offended against its provisions. The most likely is that he had spent time as a novice at another Cistercian house, and having no commendatory letters from the abbot concerned, Bernard, could do no more than call on the abbot of Foigny to try to get them.

The other dateable letter might come from close to the same time as the previous letter or perhaps as many as 20 years later. It involved a

---

[65] *Instituta Generalis Capituli*, cap. 33, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Cîteaux, 1999), pp. 338–339, trans. at p. 469 and dated "tentatively" to 1133/34, p. 299. Abbreviated henceforth as Waddell, *NLTC*.

[66] Waddell, *NLTC*, cap. 11, p. 329, trans p. 461, dated to the abbacy of Stephen Harding. Tobit 4:16 occurs in the Rule of Saint Benedict, cap. 61.14, as after note 32 above.

man from the monastery of Tronc Berenger, in Artois, better known as Arrouaise, the first house of a canonical community to whose abbot, Gervase, Bernard wrote.[67] A Brother Dodo had arrived at Clairvaux wishing to be admitted, but now he was going back since Bernard could find "no good reason" for his wanting to change his way of life, although he had some scruple arising from an oath he had taken before he entered Arrouaise. Bernard had decided that the oath had no significance since it was to undertake a "less strict and less regular" form of life.[68] Finally he asked that Dodo be taken back in a kindly manner and shared his feeling that the man would now follow Gervase's "precept and advice."

Scruples, unspecified, were the cause of a Brother Lambert wandering from his home monastery, whose name is not given, to Clairvaux.[69] Bernard thought his intentions were good but believed he was wrong to have left without the permission of his abbot. He had therefore reprimanded him, but sent him home with a wish that he be taken back and treated gently.

The abbot of a house dedicated to Saint Vincent, of which there must have been many, was similarly asked to receive back Brother John, who, Bernard said, was now willing to amend his ways.[70] He asked that John be given "a more lenient and gentle reception than is usual in the case of a returned runaway" on the grounds that if this happened he would realise that it "was to his advantage to have commended himself to you through me and to be justified himself with my commendation."

The two remaining letters in this group both concern well-intentioned men who had come to Clairvaux from the world but who lacked the physical resources to sustain the hard life of a Cistercian. So Bernard commended two young men to an unnamed Benedictine abbot and one lone cleric, who was "excellently behaved and highly cultured," to the abbot of the regular canons of Saint Martin in Troyes.[71] This group

[67] Ep. 417; OSB 6.2, p. 572, dated pre-1147; SBO 8, pp. 401–402; J 448, pp. 512–513.
[68] See the letter about a monk from Flay cited following note 50 above.
[69] Ep. 101; OSB 6.1, p. 482, undated; J 102, p. 149; SBO 7, pp. 256–257.
[70] Ep. 445; OSB 6.2, pp. 604–606, undated; SBO 8, p. 422; J 463, p. 519, where James has "L" as the initial of the monk. For Bartholomew, Bernard's brother, refusing to be treated as a runaway, see following note 152 below.
[71] Epp. 442, 408; OSB 6.2, p. 602, undated, pp. 550–552; J 461, 440, pp. 507, 518; SBO 8, pp. 420 and 389.

of letters shows, often in very short space, the care with which Bernard reacted to people who proved to be unsuitable for Clairvaux.

We now need to ask why letters about *transitus* almost disappear after 1131. One text, so far not mentioned—Bernard's own treatise *De Praecepto et Dispensatione*—probably played a part. Like all his treatises, it bore no date of composition, but Peter the Venerable's claim that he had seen a copy before he set off for Spain in June 1142, puts its composition back at least to, say, *c.*1140/41.[72]

Eight paragraphs deal with *transitus* in which Bernard makes three main assertions: that he would advise someone disturbed by "the irreligious and vicious habits of his brethren" to move somewhere else where he could follow the kind of life he wished; that for people living in a "proper and well regulated monastery" he would never recommend a move "without permission from his superiors"; and, lastly, that for such a person to move and later change his mind and decide to return to his former home would be a kind of apostasy. To that last point Bernard admitted only one exception: namely, if the new house was not far from the person's former home. Bernard stated his reason clearly: "In that case the rule is clear: a monk from a known monastery cannot be kept or even received." He stressed the same point in two further comments, emphasising that the mover must have his superior's permission, unless he moves "to a distant and unknown house."And finally he added: "Our own experience has repeatedly proven the folly of presuming to set aside this provision of the Rule."[73]

Here Bernard reveals a view vastly different from that which he had held 20 years earlier. Perhaps he had learned from the protests raised by the monks at Flay and, no doubt, other places and had become more cautious. As for houses which found members who wished to join the Cistercians, they may have come to feel that it was better to let them leave peacefully, rather than try to hold on to them.

---

[72] See the excellent introduction to *Bernard de Clairvaux, Le Précepte et La Dispense*, intro., trans., and notes Françoise Callerot, Jürgen Miethke, and Christiane Jaquinod, SChr, 457 (Paris, 2000), pp. 23–24.

[73] Rule of Saint Benedict, cap. 44–51 (note 32 above), pp. 245–258; I quote the translation by Conrad Greenia, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 1 *Treatises*, Cistercian Fathers Series, 1 (Shannon, 1970), pp. 138–142.

Patrons and Benefactors

Every monastery needed material resources of various kinds, of which land—which might provide raw materials for building, as well as food—was probably the most significant, closely followed by cash, so monks could buy what they could not grow themselves. So patrons and benefactors were essential. Bernard's surviving letters reflect this situation, but only a small number of letters, 13, deal with them, and often as a footnote to other matters. Their distribution over time is rather surprising: none survives before 1132, even though Clairvaux's family of houses was growing from 1118.

The earliest extant letter is addressed to Henry I, commending the party which Bernard had chosen to establish at Rievaulx, Clairvaux's first foundation in England. The two men had met the year before when Bernard had been with the king when he travelled, for the first and only time of his life, beyond the borders of his duchy of Normandy to Chartres, where he met Innocent II and accepted his claim to be the rightful pope.[74] The letter reflects their contact in that it is entirely written in terms which would appeal to a warrior king and makes its points succinctly and forcefully.[75]

> To Henry, the illustrious king of England, that in his earthly kingdom he may faithfully serve and humbly obey the King of Heaven, from Bernard, styled Abbot of Clairvaux. In your land there is an outpost of my Lord and your Lord, an outpost which he has preferred to die for than lose. I have proposed to occupy it and I am sending men from my army who will, if it is not displeasing to you, claim it, recover it, and restore it with a strong hand. For this purpose I have sent ahead these men who now stand before you to reconnoitre. They will investigate the situation carefully and report back to me faithfully. Help them as messengers of your Lord and in their persons fulfil your duties as a vassal of their Lord. And may he for his honour, the salvation of your soul, and the health and peace of your kingdom, bring you safe and happy to a good and peaceful end.

Bernard's ability to choose words readily accessible to his correspondent is powerful; here a warrior king, nearing the end of his life, could respond to a series of seven short sentences which employed an extended military metaphor, while obviously biblical language was

---

[74] VP 2. i.4; PL 185:271.
[75] Ep. 92; OSB 6.1, p. 454, dated 1132; SBO 7, p. 241; J 95, pp. 141–142.

eschewed.[76] The letter served as a passport for the monks, some of whom came from Yorkshire where they were travelling, and ensured their journey would be understood by the king.

Around three years later Bernard was in touch with a recently elected bishop, Ardutius of Geneva, wishing to stir him to behave better than he had done before his consecration.[77] Here the message, as befits a bishop, comes laden with biblical language appearing in 12 places in just two short paragraphs. Right at the end, however, without any such allusions or quotations, Bernard commended to him the needs "of my poor brethren who are near you, both those of Bonmont in the Alps, and those at Hautecombe," rather starkly concluding, "May I experience in their persons how much you care for me." Both these houses were probably within Ardutius's diocese and had become affiliated to Clairvaux, in 1131 and 1135 respectively. Probably a bishop's help may have been particularly needed for such houses, because at Clairvaux other earlier patrons might not have been well known.

Such begging letters on behalf of a particular house cover most of this type of letter, the majority of which are directed to places in the northern half of geographical France. One letter shows how a donor's death might leave an awkward situation until his heir decided whether or not to confirm or ratify that gift. So Bernard approached Simon, son of the castellan of Cambrai, about some woodland which his father had given to Vaucelles, a daughter house of Clairvaux founded in 1131.[78] If he agreed to ratify his father's gift of forest land, Bernard assured him that the monks would give thanks for past kindness and hope for similar help in future, while pouring forth "our prayers for you and yours," among whom he mentioned "your wife and all who belong to you."

Much later, Bernard was concerned about a daughter house at Boixe, in the diocese of Angoulême, established on land given by the count in 1143.[79] Now, about seven years later, Bernard complained that the count was demanding too high a rent, much higher than anything they were used to. To persuade him to reduce it, Bernard said that if he did then he "would be able to appear with greater confidence before

---

[76] The editors of SBO note no biblical echoes.

[77] Ep. 28; OSB 6.1, pp. 152–154, dated late 1135/early 1136; SBO 7, pp. 81–82; J 29, pp. 62–63. James spells the former incorrectly as Bonnemont.

[78] Ep. 186; OSB 6.1, p. 770, dated *c*.1140; SBO 8, pp. 8–9; J 229, p. 308.

[79] Ep. 299; OSB 6.2, p. 280, dated *c*.1150; SBO 8, p. 215 ; J 364, p. 436.

the tribunal of Christ," since he would then have "the poor of Christ to love you and intercede for you." In fact Boixe had to be given up, since a nearby Benedictine house, at Saint-Amand, which had opposed the Cistercians because they claimed they had rights over parts of the land given to the new monastery, finally took violent action when the local bishop arrived to consecrate a cemetery for the Cistercians. New buildings, woods, and vineyards were all destroyed, and finally Bernard was asked by both sides to arbitrate between the two communities. This in itself is a remarkable tribute to the respect which he had gained, while his ability to take a detached view is shown by the fact that he decided, at a meeting held probably in late July 1153 at Clairvaux, in the presence of the bishops of Angoulême and Langres, that the Cistercians, monks from his own Clairvaux, should give up their attempt to establish the monastery, in return for a compensatory payment of 60 marks of silver.[80] This has some claim to be the last public act of his life.

By the 1130s certain types of property had come to be considered by Cistercians as unacceptable, and one formal charter, witnessed and dated, shows Bernard in 1152 selling a mill belonging to Mores, a daughter house founded in the diocese of Langres two years earlier, to Peter, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Celles, because "they are unable to take the revenues from it."[81]

In contrast to these five letters involving daughter houses, there is only a single letter about gifts to Clairvaux itself, dating probably after 1125 and before 1152.[82] This is a rather curious text, to an unknown person who had apparently accused Bernard of having persuaded Theobald of Champagne to give money to Clairvaux. This Bernard denied, although he admitted that he "could have squeezed something out of him for myself, if I had wished." Such words betray Bernard's

[80] *Bernard de Clairvaux*, Commission d'histoire de l'ordre de Cîteaux, 3 (Paris, 1953), pp. 248–249, and A. Dimier, "Les fondations manquées de saint Bernard, *Cîteaux* 20 (1969), 4–13, at pp. 9–10.

[81] Ep. 419; OSB 6.2, p. 576, dated 1152; SBO 8, pp. 403–404; J 450, pp. 513–514; see *Exordium Parvum*, cap. xv, headed *Instituta monachorum Cisterciensium de Molismo venientium*, and notes, in Waddell, *NLTC*, pp. 434–435, notes p. 436, and for date, p. 415; and *Instituta*, cap. IX, *Quod redditus non habeamus*, p. 460. In both cases a translation is en face.

[82] Ep. 416; OSB 6.2, p. 570; SBO 8, p. 400; J 447, p. 512. The editors assigned no date, but since it mentions the count of Champagne, surely Theobald, it comes after 1125, when he became count, and before his death in 1152.

confidence in his powers of persuasion, which could have irritated other would-be fund-raisers.

Other letters show Bernard commending to the care of a Roman noblewoman abbots from England arriving in Rome to appeal about the disputed election at York, praising Peter the Venerable's generosity towards "our Order's poor" to Eugenius III, and appealing to the count of Nevers to aid "the servants of God at Molesme," that is to say the house from which the monks who established Cîteaux had come.[83] Finally, one may note a late, formal letter to Hugh, archbishop of Rouen, of probably 1151 or 1150.[84] Here he informed Hugh that the bishop of Bayeux had made a gift to Savigny, characterized as "your sons, our brothers of Savigny," a description reflecting the fact that in 1147 Savigny and all its daughter houses had become part of the wider Cistercian family, while Savigny itself became subject to Clairvaux.[85]

Foundations and Affiliations

A substantial number of letters concern the founding of new monasteries or the affiliation of existing communities, the two ways in which Bernard's "family" increased. This process began in 1118, three years after Clairvaux itself had been founded.[86] Thereafter few years lacked growth, with the notable exception of the six years from 1122 to 1127. Later the only "sterile" years were 1130, 1133, and 1150. This steady growth is not, however, reflected in the surviving letters, whether considered from a chronological or geographical point of view. Only one survives for the period before 1120, 12 from the 1130s, and 19 for the 1140s, but none for the last four years of Bernard's life, 1150–53. The spatial spread of houses also raises questions. A significant group of letters concerns Fountains, but relatively little about Clairvaux's other direct foundations within Britain, nothing about foundations in Scandinavia, and only two letters about Spain, whereas it was there,

---

[83] Ep. 530; OSB 6.2, pp. 712–714, dated early 1142; SBO 8, pp. 495–496; J 194, p. 265; Ep. 277; OSB 6.2, pp. 232–234, dated Nov. 1151: J 349, pp. 427–428; Ep. 516; OSB 6.2, p. 686, undated; J 232, p. 310.

[84] Ep. 418; OSB 6.2, p. 574; SBO 8, pp. 402–403; J 449, p. 513.

[85] See my "The Affiliation of Savigny," in *Truth as Gift, Studies in Honor of John R. Sommerfeldt*, ed. Marsha Dutton, Daniel M. LaCorte, and Paul Lockey, Cistercian Studies Series, 204 (Kalamazoo, 2004), p. 86, n. 102, where I suggest 1151 or, less likely, 1150, rather than 1152 as OSB.

[86] See Table 1 below.

or more precisely in Castille-Leon, where perhaps the most extensive growth occurred.

Instead of adopting a roughly chronological order for this group of letters, it seems more helpful to use the groups of letters relating to foundations made by Roger of Sicily and the Irish bishop Malachy as a framework around which letters about other new houses can be arranged, while affiliations will be treated separately.

New Foundations

Establishing a new house involved a number of acts: finding a patron; checking whether he or she could offer a suitable site, with sufficient resources of an acceptable kind; and being sure that there were enough trained monks at Clairvaux to staff the new place. At each stage problems might arise which could lead to the process being delayed or even completely aborted. Let us begin by exploring how Roger and Malachy came into contact with Bernard and became potential patrons.

Four letters connected with Roger's foundation all appear to have been written around 1140, a year or so after he had come to terms with Innocent II on 7 July 1139.[87] Two years earlier, in 1137, Bernard and Roger had gotten to know each other well, when they discussed, over three months, a political and ecclesiastical settlement, following Roger's defeat in the great battle at Rignano on 2 October 1137.[88] Those negotiations came to nothing, but around 1140 a plan to found a Cistercian house within his kingdom had become part of what may have been plans to ally him with 'sound' catholic princes in northern Europe. Part of this is reflected in a letter in which Bernard instructed an intermediary with a message he wished to pass to a representative of Roger's who was expected to be at Montpellier, bringing a daughter of the king's to marry a son of Bernard's great noble supporter, Theobald of Blois-Champagne.[89]

Malachy, in contrast, met Bernard for the first time early in 1140 when he made a detour to visit Clairvaux from his journey towards Rome, where he hoped to persuade the pope to provide *pallia* for

[87] Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 52–53.
[88] Ibid, p. 51.
[89] Ep. 447; OSB 6.2, p. 608; SBO 8, p. 424; J 279, p. 351.

the two archbishops in Ireland.[90] It seems likely that he had heard of Bernard's monastery and its increasing "family" of monasteries and wanted to see for himself both abbot and abbey. Although there is no evidence that Irishmen had been attracted to enter Clairvaux before 1140, as Englishmen had a decade earlier, one can identify at least two kinds of community through which Malachy's interest could have been aroused.

Within Ireland there were two recently founded monasteries attached to the Norman abbey of Savigny, one of which, Erenagh, founded in 1127, was close to Down, the see to which Malachy had retired when he had appointed someone to fill his place as archbishop of Armagh.[91] Not far distant from Northern Ireland in the westernmost part of Lancashire was another Savigniac house, Furness, which had moved there from Tulketh in the south of the county in 1127, and Furness was the mother house of Rushen, on the Isle of Man, founded in 1134.[92] Savigniac life was fairly close to Cistercian, and one would expect Bernard's writings to have been in their libraries.[93] On Malachy's Romeward journey Bernard recorded that he reached York from Scotland, a route taking him near to two houses in Bernard's monastic family, Rievaulx and Fountains. One may suppose, however, that if Malachy had actually visited either place it would have been recorded there.

Whatever took Malachy to Clairvaux, his first visit left an indelible impression on him, since he tried to persuade the pope to allow him to resign his bishopric and enter Clairvaux as a monk. When Innocent refused, Malachy decided to leave behind him at Clairvaux some of his companions to be trained in Cistercian practices. Once home, he found in Donough O'Carroll, king of Uriel, a man already concerned

---

[90] *Vita Malachiae*, paras 32–39; SBO 3, pp. 339–345; *Bernard of Clairvaux*, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, trans. Robert T. Meyer, Cistercian Fathers Series, 10 (Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 48–53. Some scholars put the outward journey in 1139, but there is no clear evidence. The *Vita* is the main source for what follows.

[91] *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. Christopher Norton and David Park (Cambridge, 1986), p. 400.

[92] Ibid, for Rushen, which is not given in Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (note 25 above), except on their second map.

[93] David N. Bell, *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*, Corpus of British Medieval Library catalogues, 3 (London, 1992), has only two short 16th-century lists for former Savigniac houses, without any Bernardine works.

to reform the Church in Ireland, a patron to provide a site for the new abbey.[94]

But whereas both Roger and Malachy succeeded in effecting their plans, two letters record intentions which went no further, those of the archbishop of Pisa and the duchess of Lorraine.[95] In both cases they had met Bernard as he promoted the cause of Innocent II as rightful pope following the disputed election of February 1130. The duchess was a sister of the emperor Lothar, and although her plans came to nothing, after her husband died in 1139 she entered the Cistercian house for nuns at Tart. A monastery planned in the diocese of Metz failed to materialise there, but its main protagonist, the senior cleric at Metz, carried it out after he was elected archbishop of Trier in 1132.[96] Two years later he established a monastery at Winterbach, in a side valley of the Moselle. That place proved unsuitable, so five years later the community moved to Himmerod, where it flourished.

Such movements were not uncommon, despite the "inspection" process, to be mentioned in a moment. The earliest example mentioned in these letters probably concerns either Trois Fontaines or Fontenay. The former lay in the diocese of Châlons; the latter in Langres and has been dated to 1118–19.[97] Bernard wrote to a noble woman living close to Clairvaux, answering her enquiry about his state of health. There he explained that he had recently moved some monks from "a wilderness, from fearful desert spaces" to "an abundance of everything, of buildings and friends, into a fertile land, and a dwelling place of great beauty."

The Sicilian letters show that the next stage in the founding process was the inspection of the site, in that case by two Clairvaux monks, satisfying themselves of its relative withdrawal from the world.[98] If they thought it suitable, Bernard promised the king that he would send out a full complement of monks with an abbot. But when Malachy asked for two monks, Bernard was unwilling to comply, since he claimed that the monks being trained at Clairvaux were not yet ready to go.

---

[94] Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland* (London and New Haven 1987), p. 14.

[95] Epp. 505, 120; OSB 6.2, pp. 664–668, dated August/September 1137, and OSB 6.1, pp. 558–560, dated pre-1139; SBO 8, pp. 462–464, and 7, pp. 300–301; J 115, pp. 172–174, and 124, p. 184.

[96] Ep. 30; OSB 6.1, pp. 156–158, dated 1131; SBO 7, p. 84; J 31, p. 64.

[97] Ep. 118; OSB 6.1, pp. 554–556; SBO 7, pp. 298–299; J 121, pp. 182–183.

[98] Ep. 447; OSB 6.2, p. 608; SBO 8, p. 424; J 279, p. 351.

Instead he told Malachy to "look for and prepare a site similar to what you have seen here, far removed from the turmoil of the world" [*a tumultibus sæculi separatum*].[99]

Milan presents a different story. Bernard travelled there after the Council at Pisa, partly to establish peace in the city, that is to say to reconcile it with Innocent II, but also to meet a group of men who wished to join the Cistercians but lacked a close-by monastery to enter. He wrote to them as he travelled south to Pisa, assuring them that he would visit them after the Council.[100] Then, he must have been able to inspect the site and find it suitable, since the traditional foundation date of this Italian Clairvaux, Chiaravalle, is in July of that year.

The letters to Roger of Sicily and Malachy reveal what happened next. Both received an introductory letter for the founding party, and when news of their safe arrival had reached Clairvaux, another letter, expressing delight at the good news and also, in Malachy's case, showing that there had been problems.[101] The most serious of these was that some of the "French" monks had returned to Clairvaux, finding the local people "little disciplined." Bernard was able to send one called Christian back, but others he could not persuade, and was "loathe to oblige them to do so against their will." With Christian, Bernard was able to send "my dear brother Robert" to help in the "buildings and other things necessary for the well-being of the house." His influence has been traced in "the many Burgundian elements" at Mellifont, the new monastery.[102] Before leaving Roger and Malachy, it is worth noting that whereas there is no doubt that the Irish house was Mellifont, there has been uncertainty about where Roger's foundation was. Now San Nicholas de Mottafilocastro, near Nicoltera in Calabria, has gained most support.[103]

---

[99] Ep. 341; OSB 6.2, pp. 386–388, dated 1140; SBO 8, p. 282; J 383, pp. 452–453. Cf. *Instituta* I: monasteries were to be "in locis a conversatione hominum semotis"; in Waddell, *NLTC*, p. 458.

[100] Ep. 134; OSB 6.1, pp. 622–624, dated April/May 1135; SBO 7, p. 330; J 135, pp. 204–205.

[101] Epp. 208, 209 to Roger; OSB 6.1, pp. 886–888, 888–890; SBO 8, pp. 67–68 and 68–69; J 277, pp. 349–350, and p. 350. Epp. 356, 357 to Malachy; OSB 6.2, p. 414, dated 1141; SBO 8, pp. 301–302; J 384, p. 453; and OSB 6.2, pp. 416–418, dated 1142; J 385, pp. 454–455.

[102] Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland* (note 94 above), pp. 41, 56, 57, 71, 81, 79, 235, 248.

[103] Ep. 447; OSB 6.2, p. 609; SBO 8, p. 424. Matthew, *Norman Kingdom* (note 87 above), never mentions the foundation or the letters about it.

One letter to Pope Innocent, responding to his request for monks to settle the deserted monastery of Saints Vincent and Anastasius on the Via Laurentiana on the outskirts of Rome, reveals the differing numbers of monks needed for wholly new, or affiliated, foundations, and shows how Bernard's ability to find enough monks depended on how many communities had been created recently or were being planned.[104] Bernard told the pope that he could not send monks because he did not have the usual crowd (*copia personarum*) at Clairvaux, explaining, "Besides those who have been sent in twos or threes to other places, three new monasteries have been wholly founded from here since I left you [*tria ex eis nova monasteria… integer ordinata sunt*], and there remain others to be founded in the near future [*et adhuc restant alia proxime ordinanda*]." The places needing merely twos or threes must mean affiliated houses, who would require a short-time "training party," while the wholly founded monasteries must be new places. Even so, Bernard said he would try to get monks from other houses and send them when he could. This is a crucial reference to a process not covered in Cistercian regulations.[105]

The letters also reveal two cases of economic difficulties faced by the Order, and one where a house was helped by a neighbouring Benedictine neighbour. Bernard complained to the duke and duchess of Lorraine that although they had agreed not to tax "our merchants" moving goods through their lands, their servants were doing just that. He asked that this should stop.[106] He also made a short appeal to Suger, the powerful abbot of Saint Denis near Paris and right-hand man of Louis VII, probably around 1149, that the king should help Noirlac, founded in 1136, whose monks lacked food, reminding him that Louis used to help when nearby, and that he had heard the royal crops were "ample."[107] The fact that the Benedictines at Saint Bertin had helped the newly founded daughter house of Dunes at Clairmarais between

---

[104] Ep. 184; OSB 6.1, p. 762, dated 1140; SBO 8, p. 4; J 227, p. 305. OSB notes that the three wholly founded houses were La Bénisson-Dieu, Dunes, and Clairmarais, although saying Dunes had begun as a Benedictine house, affiliated 1138/39. This seems odd, since affiliated places usually needed a few monks to train them in Cistercian ways.

[105] See Holdsworth, "Savigny" (note 85 above), p. 85, for the "trainer" Bernard sent to Savigny itself.

[106] Ep. 119; OSB 6.1, pp. 556–558, dated pre-19 April 1139; SBO 7, p. 342; J 123, pp. 183–184.

[107] Ep. 378; OSB 6.2, pp. 476–478; SBO 8, p. 342; J 406, p. 477.

1140–45 emerges from letters, whose main purpose was to explain why Bernard had accepted a monk from Saint Bertin.[108]

Affiliations

Far fewer letters survive about affiliated houses, which is not surprising since most had been created some years before they linked themselves to Clairvaux. Enough letters survive for Fountains Abbey near Ripon in Yorkshire to form a framework around which the scanty material for other places can be grouped.

They show how what began as a breakaway group from the well-established Benedictine monastery of Saint Mary's in York was settled by Thurstan, the sympathetic archbishop, on an estate belonging to his see. We see Bernard attempting to soothe the feelings of the abbot of Saint Mary's and commending the needs of the new monastery to David, king of Scotland.[109] Since that community had chosen to become Cistercians and start their new community from scratch, as it were, one might not have expected that they would need to take specific steps to make their practices acceptable to the Order. But even to them Bernard sent one of his monks, Geoffrey of Ainai, a few years after they had settled at Fountains, to "teach them the elements of the life of the Order, how they ought to live, and maintain their life according to the discipline of the Order."[110]

At Aulps, in the diocese of Geneva, changes affecting income and organisation were needed. It was a place originally founded by Robert of Molesme, the monastery from which the first proto-Cistercians had departed to establish a new form of life at Cîteaux in 1098. Bernard

---

[108] Epp. 383–384; OSB 6.2, pp. 486–490; SBO 8, pp. 349–351; J 421–422, pp. 490–491. See note 58 above for the other letters. The status of Clairmarais is given in OSB as daughter of Clairvaux, but Thomas Coomans, *L'abbaye de Villers. Construction, configuration et signification d'une abbaye cistercienne gothique*, Studia et Documenta, 11 (Cîteaux, 2000), p. 40, has it as daughter of Les Dunes. The closer connection with Clairvaux is suggested by references to Bernard in grants made to Clairmarais by King Stephen, his wife, and son, which would be unusual were it not attached to Clairvaux; see *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, 3, ed. H.A Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968), nos. 194, 195 of 1140–1142.

[109] Epp. 94–96, 313; OSB 6.1, pp. 458–460; SBO 7, pp. 243–244; OSB 6.2, pp. 322–328; SBO 8, pp. 343–346; OSB 6.1, pp. 462–464; SBO 7, pp. 244–247. The first dated 1133, the others autumn 1133: J 168–171, pp. 235–241.

[110] D.F.L. Chadd, "Liturgy and Liturgical Music," in Norton and Park, *Cistercian Art and Architecture*, p. 304, quoting from J.R. Walbran and J.T. Fowler, eds, *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, 3 vols, Surtees Society, 42, 67, 130 (1863–1918), at 1:46–48.

had visited it on his way north from Italy, late in 1135, and had found the abbot making changes so that his house could be affiliated to the swiftly growing Order.[111] Soon after his visit, Bernard wrote to congratulate the abbot on the changes he was making, mentioning "giving up your churches and ecclesiastical benefices…destroying those synagogues of Satan, the cells where three or four monks live without order or discipline," and "closing your monasteries to women." Such changes were, Bernard wrote, particularly praiseworthy in an already old man, and his letter urged the abbot to maintain the new course he had taken and not to forget that he must see that the inner person needed constant renewal if reform was to be effective. Aulps was, in fact, affiliated at the General Chapter in 1136.

Not every community thinking about affiliation was able to do so, just as not every potential founder could achieve his hopes. Two letters to Sancia, sister of Alfonso VII of Castile and Leon and founder of Espina as a daughter house of Clairvaux in 1147, asked her help in enabling the abbot of a small Benedictine community at Toldanos in the diocese of Zamora, to affiliate to her own foundation.[112] This in fact never happened, because Toldanos belonged to a family of monasteries centred on Carracedo, whose abbot was unwilling to, in effect, allow it to free itself from his authority. The letters show that Bernard had sent his youngest brother Nivard to make contact with the princess. Other evidence shows that in the same year he visited Brittany and Wales and was involved with the foundation of Soulèvre and Margam.[113]

Affiliated houses needed benefactors, just like new foundations, and sometimes ran into difficulties. The newly affiliated abbey of Grandselve in the diocese of Toulouse was commended to the people of that city, while Bernard complained to Pope Innocent about the way the dean of Besançon was treating Cherlieu, affiliated to Clairvaux a decade earlier, as well as to the dean himself.[114]

---

[111] Ep. 254; OSB 6.2, pp. 170–178, dated early 1136; SBO 8, pp. 155–160; J 329, pp. 408–411. Cf. *Summa Cartae Caritatis*, caps. xxiii (on churches), viiii (minimum of 12 monks in a foundation), xvii–xviii (against women in the monastery); Waddell, *NLTC*, pp. 187, 189, 191.

[112] Ep. 301, 455; OSB 6.2, pp. 284–286, 618–620, dated *c.*1149; SBO 8, pp. 217–218 and 430–431; J 366, 367, pp. 437–439.

[113] See Holdsworth, "Savigny" (note 85 above), pp. 76–77.

[114] Epp. 242 (Toulouse), 197–198 (Cherlieu); OSB 6.2, pp. 114–116, dated August 1145; SBO 8, pp. 128–129; J 318, pp. 389–391; OSB 6.1, pp. 861–864, dated 1141; SBO 8, p. 53; J 253–54, pp. 333–335.

Bernard's Other Responsibilities as Father Abbot

It is often recognised that one feature of early Cistercian life which attracted recruits, and persuaded patrons and benefactors to support them, was the development of new means to maintain uniformity of practice in all the monasteries which followed their customs. Three procedures were crucial: the oversight of elections of abbots; inspection of every house at regular, annual intervals; and an annual gathering of all the abbots at Cîteaux, the mother house of the Order. What I hope to achieve here is to throw light from Bernard's letters on how he seems to have dealt with these three characteristic Cistercian procedures.

Abbatial Elections

Only six letters survive about elections, involving four different monasteries, three in geographic France and one in England, dating between 1137 and 1150. One might hold that such a small number, in a family of around 60 monasteries by 1150, is unlikely to be representative. However, if they provide evidence that the procedures described in the earliest relevant texts were being followed, or not, this seems, to me at least, significant.

The earliest letter to Humbert, abbot of Igny, lamented that he had resigned his office, which Bernard believed left his abbey "exposed to danger," and that just at a time when Bernard was unable to do anything because he was engaged with "the needs of the whole church."[115] This phrase alerts one to the fact that the letter almost certainly comes from the time when Bernard was in Italy, from the spring of 1137 until June the next year. The tone of this letter sounds at times almost sarcastic, as, for example, when Bernard wrote that "You have no disobedient monks, you have no neighbours laying violent hands on your property, you do not suffer from scarcity, or insufficient means of support, so that you might feel deeply depressed."As for himself, he claimed to be "so upset by the general and grave situation in the Church that life has become a burden to me, even if you and yours are able to live in peace." He failed, however, to dissuade Humbert,

[115] Ep. 141; OSB 6.1, pp. 636–638, dated 1137; SBO 7, pp. 338–339; J 150, pp. 218–219.

who retired to Clairvaux next year. When he died there ten years later, Bernard preached at his funeral and remembered him warmly.[116]

In the spring of 1138 Bernard, still in Italy, was faced with the fact that the abbot of Aulps, Guarinus, had been elected bishop of Sion.[117] He therefore wrote to the monks telling them to summon Geoffrey, prior at Clairvaux, to preside over an election, and that if he were unable to come, then to accept whomever he sent in his place, as well as take advice from the new bishop, their old abbot. The kind of person he hoped they would chose was someone "able to work for the honour of God and your salvation."

Five years later, Bernard had to deal with a vacancy at Fountains, following the death of Richard, the second abbot of that name in 1143. The various steps he took can be traced in three letters, backed up by information in the history written at the end of the century at Fountains itself. His first letter went to William of Rievaulx and Richard of Fountains.[118] Here Bernard told them that he was obliged to visit "by the Rule of our Order" [*Ordinis ratione et debito institutionis exire compellor*], but he would have wished "to attempt something greater than this," namely, to travel to England to see them. But his bodily weakness, on the one hand, and the journeyings he had to make "on the business of my brethren and in the cause of the Church," on the other, prevented him doing so. He had, therefore, decided to send "my brother and dear friend, Henry [i.e., Henry Murdac] abbot of Vauclair" whom they were to hear as they would Bernard. "He," indeed, "is an upright and reasonable man who has taken on his shoulders some of my own cares and burdens and shares my powers for the correction of faults and maintenance of the Order" [*quae pertinent ad correctionem culparum et ad statum ordinis conservandum*].

By the time he wrote again, the situation had changed. Richard of Fountains had died at Clairvaux on 12 October, falling ill there on his way back from chapter.[119] So now Bernard informed Alexander, prior at Fountains, and the community there of his passing. "Your

[116] See, "In obitu domni Humberti," SBO 5, pp. 440–447.

[117] Ep. 142; OSB 6.1, pp. 640–642; SBO 7, pp. 340–341; J 151, pp. 219–221.

[118] Ep. 535; OSB 6.2, pp. 720–722, dated mid-1143; SBO 8, pp. 500–501; J 201, pp. 269–270. Richard of Fountains is known to have been in Rome with the abbot of Rievaulx, to appeal against the election of William fitzHerbert as archbishop of York, visiting Clairvaux on the outward and return journeys, reaching Fountains on 22 May.

[119] Ep. 320; OSB 6.2, pp. 342–344, dated October 1143; SBO 8, pp. 253–254; J 173, pp. 242–243.

venerable father has finished his course and fallen asleep in the Lord." He told them that he had wanted to send someone to them "long ago" and had planned to send Abbot Henry, something they would surely have known from the earlier letter, but other matters had detained him. With Henry he had sent William, "a very dear son of mine," who has not, I think, been identified. Again he admonished the monks to listen to Henry's advice as they would Bernard's, and he repeated that Henry had full authority in the election and about anything else which might "need regularising or correcting" at Fountains or other monasteries "which had gone out from Fountains" [*vel in ceteris quae ab eo exierunt*].[120]

The final letter went to Abbot Henry, telling him that if the Fountains monks, advised by Abbot William (of Rievaulx), chose him, he was to submit to their choice.[121] He need not worry about Vauclair, his own monastery, for Bernard would see that a good administrator was found there [*utilem . . . dispensatorem*], and would pacify the local bishop. As is well known, on this occasion, Bernard got his way: Murdac became abbot of Fountains and, even when he became archbishop at York, continued to exercise such influence over affairs there that modern historians often call its abbots his subordinates.

The last letter around the topic of an election concerned Trois Fontaines, Clairvaux's first daughter house, situated in the diocese of Châlons. The election followed the elevation of Hugh, its abbot, to the post of cardinal bishop of Ostia.[122] When Bernard wrote to Hugh, three candidates had been considered by the monks. First was Nicholas, whom both the former abbot, now cardinal, and Bernard agreed was suitable; but he was rejected by the electors. Next Bernard proposed a certain Robert, but the cardinal found him unacceptable, whereafter Bernard placed Robert as abbot in a recently founded daughter house

---

[120] In 1143 daughter houses of Fountains were Louth Park, 1137; Newminster, 1138/39; and Kirkstead, 1139. Of these Kirkstead may have had a vacancy that year: *The Heads of Religious Houses. England and Wales, vol. 1 (940–1216)*, ed. David Knowles and C.N.L. Brooke (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), p. 136.

[121] Ep. 321; OSB 6.2, pp. 344–346, also Oct. 1143; SBO 8, p. 255; J 174, pp. 243–244.

[122] Ep. 306; OSB 6.2, pp. 296–302, dated 1150; SBO 8, pp. 223–225; J 373, pp. 443–445. It must date after February that year when Thorald of Fountains was still abbot; see *Heads* (note 120 above), 1:132. For a resume of events see *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 80 above), pp. 169–170. An odd feature is that Thorald is not named in Bernard's letter, only in the title given in the manuscripts.

not far from Clairvaux.[123] Then the monks chose Thorald, one-time abbot of Fountains, about whose resignation Hugh raised questions. To that innuendo, Bernard replied that Murdac, who was in a position to know, had never said anything damaging about him "either by letter or message." He also spoke warmly about how Thorald had behaved when he went to live at Clairvaux following his resignation from Fountains. This election shows vividly how limited Bernard's influence was in getting either of his men elected, and how much he then wished for the cardinal to be back at Clairvaux.[124]

Visitations

Only two letters survive around visitations, neither of which Bernard carried out himself. One of these has already been examined as a preliminary to the discussion about the abbatial election at Fountains.[125] The other concerns a forthcoming visit to the newly settled monastery of Grâce-Dieu, founded by William X, duke of Aquitaine, as a mark of his acceptance of Innocent II as pope.[126] A verse from Psalm 54:7—"Who will give me the wings of a dove that I may fly away"—came to Bernard, or his scribe, as it did when he wanted to express a deep longing to see someone, and the letter continues: "and see the good zeal of my sons, their progress, peace, order, and discipline?" He wanted to see them in their new site, observing the Rule among strangers, but, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

General Chapter

Ten letters mention meetings of a chapter, all but two of them the General Chapter, and it is useful to consider them in chronological order. The first is ambiguous and comes in a sealed letter to Theobald of Blois, which had been taken to him by an unnamed friend, who

---

[123] Longuay, diocese of Langres, and Boulancourt, diocese of Troyes, both founded 1149, may be possible houses.

[124] See discussion following note 118 for letters to Hugh while at Trois Fontaines.

[125] See discussion following note 118 above. Evidence of visits made by Bernard was recorded at some daughter houses, e.g., Villers; see Coomans, *L'abbaye de Villers* (note 108 above), p. 61.

[126] Ep. 507; OSB 6.2, p. 670, dated probably 1135 or a little later; SBO 8, p. 465; J 176, p. 245. The verse occurs in Epp. 189, 372, and 535.

himself received a short letter.[127] He appealed to the count "by that bond of brotherhood that was conferred on you in our Chapter" [*per illam fraternitatem quam in capitulo nostro suscepistis*], to have mercy on a certain Anseric. This could refer either to the fraternity of Clairvaux, which would be awarded there, or to the Order as a whole, which would be awarded at the annual Chapter.

The next letter finds a place among Bernard's corpus although written in the name of "Stephen, abbot of Cîteaux and the whole gathering of Cistercian abbots and brethren." It is one of a group of letters which are generally recognised as having been written by Bernard.[128] In this case it was to Louis VI, expressing concern over the treatment of the bishop of Paris who had attempted to reform the secular canons of his cathedral.

Two letters from 1137 are equally clear in their meaning. In the first, Bernard, wrote from Italy to Baldwin, a one-time monk at Clairvaux who had recently become archbishop of Pisa, congratulating him on his elevation and adding, almost as an afterthought, "I humbly greet Brother Angelus with your whole household. I will send the community for the foundation through him who, God willing, you send to the Chapter, if you command."[129] This seems to be a gathering to which both Bernard and the archbishop might send messengers, which seems to fit the General Chapter, rather than Clairvaux's own. But this foundation never occurred. We also have a letter addressed to the abbots meeting at Cîteaux that very year.[130] It shows Bernard at a low ebb as a result of his travels and travails in Italy, asking for their pity for his situation. He even imagined that as a result of their prayers God might say, "Go back to your brothers, you shall die among your own and not amidst strangers."

Six years later, early in 1143, Peter the Venerable at Cluny heard from Bernard that he had "decided to stay in my monastery and not go

---

[127] Epp. 517, 518; OSB 6.2, p. 688, dated before 1125; SBO 8, pp. 476–477; J 44, 45, p. 75.

[128] Ep. 45; OSB 6.1, pp. 248–249, and dated Easter 1129; SBO 7, pp. 133–134; J, p. 77, mentions it but does not give the text.

[129] Ep. 505; OSB 6.2, pp. 664–668, dated August/September 1137; SBO 8, pp. 462–464; J 115, pp. 172–174.

[130] Ep. 145; OSB 6.1, pp. 652–654, dated 1137 a short time before chapter meeting; SBO 7, p. 347; J 145, p. 213.

out, except once a year for the General Chapter of abbots at Cîteaux."[131] Later, the following September, Suger was told that "tomorrow I have to be at Cîteaux for the Chapter [*ad Cisterciense capitulum*]."[132] In 1149 Bernard informed Peter that at the Chapter [*in conventu Cisterciensi*] "special remembrance had been made for him as a special lord, father and dearest friend, and of all his people, both the living and the dead."[133] The last two references to the Chapter occur in letters to Pope Eugenius from 1151 and 1153. In the earlier Bernard informed him that he had taken the secret acceptance of a Templar at Vaux, a Cistercian house in the family of Morimond, to the Chapter, which had decided that the man should "be put out of the Order."[134] Finally, in September 1152, Eugenius heard from Bernard that "The voice of the turtle dove has been heard in our chapter and it has filled us with joy" (a felicitous combination of Cant. 2:12 and Ps. 89:14). What follows makes clear that Bernard meant reception of the bull *Sacrosancta Romana* approving the text of the *Carta Caritatis* and other documents agreed the year before, 1151, and of the letter addressed to Abbot Goswin of Cîteaux and the fathers gathered at General Chapter, which opens with the words *Optaremus filii*.[135]

These ten letters taken as a whole provide a clear indication that Bernard considered the meetings of the Chapter serious events, where a significant range of problems was treated, even though the systematic recording of decisions had not started. But what about the evidence concerning visitation and abbatial elections, the two other practices which held the order together?

Here one feature stands out from these letters, namely, that Bernard felt it was perfectly proper to substitute for himself at an election at Aulps the prior of Clairvaux, or whoever that man might send. Henry Murdac, then abbot of Vauclair, was used as a visitor for Fountains and Rievaulx and was thought capable of presiding over an election at Fountains. In both cases the early forms of the *Carta Caritatis* do not

[131] Ep. 228; OSB 6.2, pp. 56–60, dated January 1143; SBO 8, pp. 98–100; J 305, pp. 374–376.
[132] Ep. 381; OSB 6.2, pp. 480–482, dated 13 September, 1143; SBO 8, pp. 345–346; J 409, p. 478.
[133] Ep. 389; OSB 6.2, pp. 500–502, dated November 1149; SBO 8, p. 356; J 309, pp. 379–380.
[134] Ep. 261; OSB 6.2, pp. 196–198, dated 1151; SBO 8, pp. 170–171; J 334, p. 415.
[135] Ep. 273; OSB 6.1, pp. 222–224; SBO 8, pp. 183–184; J 343, pp. 420–421.

allow, at first sight, for any such substitution.[136] It is the father abbot who visits, and presides at abbatial elections. One can see that not very long after Bernard became abbot, the family over which he was supposed to preside was far too large for one man. No individual could traverse the distances involved, stretching, as the family grew, by the mid-1140s, from Italy to Yorkshire, Spain to Scandinavia. From 1130 onwards this abbot was also being used by popes and others on a wide range of problems which often took him away from Clairvaux itself, and from other abbatial responsibilities, for considerable periods. In such circumstances, what was Bernard to do? I suggest that he, and no doubt other abbots with families outgrowing their oversight, took courage from the Rule. Benedict may have been wary about places where there were priors, but even so he said that if the abbot thought one was needed he should appoint one, whom he expected would "carry out respectfully what his abbot assigns to him."[137]

The use of another abbot could not, I think, be justified in the same way, but there is one sign that other abbots, at least as far as visitations went, were implicitly sanctioned by the General Chapter. The passage occurs in *Instituta*, number LXXI: "if during the past year any abbey has not been visited by the abbot father of the house from which it issued, either personally or through another, its abbot is to make it known in the Cistercian Chapter…" Scholars may have missed this passage because it comes under a heading "Which questions the abbot of Cîteaux is to ask in General Chapter after the monks have withdrawn."[138] According to Waddell, the statute may come from the abbacy of Raynard, which began in 1134, but in any case before 1147.[139] By 1153 the form of the *Carta* approved by Eugenius in 1152, now known as *Posterior*, included words which enshrined the principle of substitution: "Let the abbot of the senior church, personally or through one of his fellow abbots, visit once a year all the monasteries

---

[136] *Carta caritatis prior*, in *Le origini cisterciensi: documenti* (Milan, 2004), caps. 5, 11, fourth sentence and following, on visits and elections; Waddell, *NLTC*, pp. 277, 282.

[137] *Rule*, cap. 65.16, ed. Fry, p. 287.

[138] Waddell, *NLTC*, p. 488, and for its date p. 299.

[139] See C. Holdsworth, "Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux by Chrysogonus Waddell: A Review Article," *Cîteaux* 51 (2000), 157–166, at pp. 163–165; also idem, "Savigny" (note 85 above), pp. 70–71, and Christopher Norton, *Saint William of York* (Woodbridge and Rochester, 2006), p. 116, n. 138.

he has founded…"[140] My hunch is that once substitutes for visitors were accepted, it was not a far step to extend the idea to abbatial elections. The letters, therefore, show this process taking place.

Bernard's Pastoral Care

This final group of 23 letters shows Bernard responding to a wide variety of situations, mostly at monasteries belonging to his own family but also to a few from other parts of the Order and once, at least, to the situation of someone who had been trained at Clairvaux and become abbot at a house which he was teaching Cistercian practice. In some ways these letters, originating in each decade of his abbacy, show Bernard at his best, trying to smooth over difficulties, to offer encouragement, and they provide us with insight into local problems as well. It was, surely, these characteristics which made them attractive to those who compiled the *corpus*; any abbot might experience situations not unlike those which faced Bernard and so be helped to read how Bernard had reacted. In this section I have grouped the letters according to whether they concerned novices, monks, abbots, or the pope.

Four letters concern novices at three houses. The earliest was at Foigny, whose abbot, Rainald, had sent one of his novices to Clairvaux when he became unsettled because of the way he had been treated by one of the monks. The monk had, indeed, caused the novice to be expelled by the prior while the abbot was absent and persisted in trying to prevent him from being readmitted.[141] Bernard sent him back strengthened in his desire to be again accepted and implored the abbot to take him back. At the same time he wrote a powerful appeal to the recalcitrant monk to alter his behaviour, warning him with words from the apostle James "the merciless will be judged mercilessly" (Jas. 2:13).

Some years later, around 1138, Bernard wrote to Hugh, a novice at Le Miroir, a daughter house of Cîteaux, in the diocese of Lyon.[142] He had heard of Hugh's conversion to Cistercian life, which may have

---

[140] *Carta caritatis posterior*, in *Le origini cisterciensi: documenti* (note 136 above), 16: Waddell, *NLTC*, p. 501.

[141] Epp. 413, 414; OSB 6.2, pp. 564–568, dated 1121–1131; SBO 8, pp. 396–398; J 444, 445, pp. 509–511.

[142] Ep. 322; OSB 6.2, pp. 346–348, dated *c.*1138; SBO 8, pp. 258–260; J 378, pp. 449–450.

been widely known in the Order because he came from a noble family, or, possibly, Bernard had met him on one of his own journeys into Italy. In any case he used the kind of phrases he used to men from a similar background who had joined Clairvaux or one of its daughter houses, writing that there was "a festal day in heaven" about this "noble youth, gently nurtured" who had "scorned the world, sacrificed his body, renounced the affection of his parents and, taking to himself wings, leaped over the snares of riches." But in a more realistic vein he warned Hugh not to let "the roughness of our life frighten your tender years," illustrating the effects of roughness with what reads like a popular saying: "Remember that the rougher the thistle the softer the cloth." He pointed him towards looking to Christ, wounded on the cross, adapting Jesus' words to John: "He will be your mother and you will be his son" (Jn. 19:26–7). Hugh's actual parents were called demented as they wept for the son who had left them. He was advised not to talk with guests and to persevere in his decision.

At Dunes, in contrast, Bernard advised Abbot Robert how to deal with someone he had himself called "useless… and a burden."[143] On that account Bernard thought the abbot would have been justified in expelling him, and recommended that if he wanted to be merciful he could keep him, even give him another trial (which sounds like a second noviciate), but if he did not improve then he must be expelled for the sake of the other monks, "lest by one sick sheep the whole flock be contaminated," echoing the Rule 28.6–8.

Letters to individual monks, or communities of monks, are the subject of four letters. Two went to the community at Clairvaux and reflect Bernard's absences in Italy.[144] The first, interestingly, is addressed to "his dear brethren at Clairvaux, monks, lay-brothers, and novices" and complained that his absence grieved him more than theirs, since he suffered from the absence of each of them, whereas each of them only suffered from his own absence. Nonetheless he encouraged them to think that when they were "well disposed, humble, reverent, zealous in reading, attentive in prayer, fervent in fraternal charity"; then they could be sure that he was not far away from them. In contrast, those who misbehaved should realise that his spirit would not be near.

---

[143] Ep. 325; OSB 6.2, pp. 354–356, dated 1138–53 from Robert's abbacy (see note 154 below, for his installation); SBO 8, p. 262; J 380, pp. 450–451.

[144] Epp. 143–144; OSB 6.1, pp. 644–652, dated "perhaps" to 1135, and October 1137; SBO 7, pp. 342–346; J 144, 146, pp. 212–213, 214–215.

Finally he assured them that the bond of charity "will be the bond between them" and will make him "ever present to you, especially at the hours of prayer, dearest brothers." The fact that the *Vita Prima* contains an episode when a monk at Clairvaux "saw" Bernard present with them in choir when he was in fact absent may reflect the impression this letter made.[145]

Two years later, during what Bernard called "the third time my sons have been torn from me," he began by confessing that he had been consoled by "the sight, instead of God's glorious countenance which is as yet hidden from us, of you who are his holy sanctuary." This is clearly an imaginative recollection rather than a visual seeing. But the letter laments his toils which have left him "weak and sickly, and (I must admit) quite haunted by the wan spectre of death." So his final sentence appeals for prayer that he may get safely home, and "see you again, live with you, and die with you." He asked prayers too for those with whom he was working: the papal chancellor Haimeric, two cardinals, and also for those with him, including his secretary Baldwin, former monk at Clairvaux but now archbishop of Pisa, and two monks, Bruno and Gerard, who sent their greetings.

Another letter went to the monks at Trois Fontaines, Clairvaux's oldest daughter house, to encourage them following their abbot Guy's election as abbot of Cîteaux.[146] Bernard assured them that his failure to visit them was not a sign that he did not care about them; rather, he "cared for them as if you were my own sons" [*tamquam viscera mea*]. But he hoped that they would not be distressed by the departure of their own abbot. He was confident that a good successor for him would be found. Guy had left them, but, "You have not lost him, for although he has departed he has not left you. Only now he who was our own special father in God, belongs to us all."

A brother G, monk at La Crête, is the subject of a letter to his abbot.[147] He seems to have been sent to Bernard, having become ill in his own

---

[145] VP 4.i; PL 185:323. See too Conrad, abbot of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum*, dist. I, cap. xi, in *Exordium magnum Cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961), pp. 104–105, about Bernard's three visits "in the spirit" to Clairvaux during the three years he was in Italy.

[146] Ep. 71; OSB 6.1, pp. 322–324, dated 1133 at p. 323, n.1; SBO 7, p. 174; J 74, p. 103. The chronological tables, OSB 6.2, p. 748, unfortunately have 1127, which is followed in J's tables, p. 540. Guy's short abbacy at Cîteaux lasted 1133–1134; Waddell, *NLTC*, p. 299.

[147] Ep. 405; OSB 6.2, p. 548, dated 1140–44; SBO 8, p. 405; J 437, p. 506.

monastery, which is surprising, since La Crête was not a daughter of Clairvaux but of Morimond. The explanation may be that it and Clairvaux were relatively close to each other in the diocese of Langres, and possibly each equidistant from Morimond. It may be too that Clairvaux had gained a reputation as a place where "difficult" monks could be tested and set to rights. Bernard reported that G. had been behaving well in every respect, and so sent him home, recommending that he not be allowed to omit any part of the regular life, nor to use the excuse that he was not well.

The monastery of Saint Anastasius in Rome was much further away, so Bernard, having heard about its progress from Abbot Bernard (the future Pope Eugenius III), wrote to congratulate the community, hoping that some day he would be able to see them himself.[148] The abbot had asked for advice about how to manage a monastery in an unhealthy area, where many monks were not well. Claiming that he believed he had "the Spirit of God" and "knows his will in this matter," Bernard prescribed "the use of common herbs, such as are used by the poor," which "can sometimes be tolerated, and such is our custom." He went on to explain that buying fancy medicines, consulting doctors, and swallowing "their nostrums" was "especially inconsistent with the decency and simplicity of the Order," while "the proper medicine" was "humility and the most suitable prayer is <to say> 'purge me of my sins, the guilt which I freely acknowledge.'"

Ten letters went to the abbots of six different houses: one abbot, Rainald of Foigny, received three, and Guy of Trois Fontaines received two. The letters to Rainald dealt not with events but, rather, with feelings and their expression.[149] The address of the first letter sets the tone: "To his dearest Rainald, all that one devoted brother and faithful fellow servant could wish to another, from Bernard, his brother and fellow servant, not his father and lord." The thrust of Bernard's letter was to try to dissuade Rainald from using the words *father* and *lord* when writing to him. The more he used them, the more Bernard felt weighed down, yet, at the same time, he confessed that they "exalt me even while they abase me; instruct me even while they humiliate me," so that he was lifted up. This movement down and up made Bernard

[148] Ep. 345; OSB 6.2, pp. 394–396, dated 1141–45; SBO 8, pp. 286–288; J 388, pp. 458–459.

[149] Epp. 72–74; OSB 6.1, pp. 324–336, dated 1121/22, 1122/23, 1125/31; SBO 7, pp. 175–181; J 75–77, pp. 103–108.

liken it "to the work of Christ's sweet yoke, of his light burden." This in turn leads to "the lightness of the burden of Truth," which "is indeed really light, for not only is it no burden for the man who carries it, but it even carries him!" There is a certain playfulness here which probably reflects the literary training that Bernard and many others had received.

By chance I noticed that some further developments of the theme also occur in a work of William of Saint Thierry, perhaps the closest of Bernard's friends at this time.[150] Bernard's second letter complained that Rainald kept letting him know about the difficulties he was having and finding burdensome. Instead he reminded him that he was "especially abbot of the sad, faint-hearted, and discontented" among his flock. It is they who needed consoling, encouraging, and admonishing. Taking up the language of the first letter, Bernard claimed that when you do those things "you do your duty and carry your burden, and by carrying your burden, heal those you carry." The last letter shows that Rainald had reacted to the advice given in the second, to the extent that he had ceased to tell Bernard anything about "his troubles," so now he was urged not to hide everything that was going on. The point was reinforced with a quotation from Ovid: *Quando ego non timui graviora pericula veris* [When have I not by fear made the dangers greater than they really were?] (Ep.1, v 11).

Both letters to Guy, in contrast, arise out of events: the first with his discovery one day that there was no wine in the chalice over which he had already said the consecration prayer.[151] Bernard took a very practical approach and told him how he would have dealt with it. The second responded to hearing of a monk who had made a number of "comings and goings" from Trois Fontaines and who had a sense of grievance. Bernard urged that Guy should call his community together and withdraw any sentences that he might have passed upon the man previously, so that some way of receiving him back in accordance with the Rule could be found, and give him a chance to settle down. Benedict had laid down that if a monk left his monastery and later wished

[150] *On the Nature and Dignity of Love*, trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (London, 1956), cap. iv, trans. p. 25; PL 184:xxx.

[151] Epp. 69–70; OSB 6.1, pp. 314–322, dated 1128/33; SBO 7, pp. 169–173; J 72–73, pp. 99–103.

to return, he could only be readmitted if he accepted being put in the last place.[152]

Here too, and most revealingly, Bernard alluded to his treatment of his brother Bartholomew, whom he had once "with angry voice and threatening looks" told to leave Clairvaux. His brother immediately left for one of the abbey's granges, and when Bernard wanted him to return, refused to do so unless he came back to his own place in the community "and not be put in the last place as if he had been a runaway." In this situation Bernard, realising that he could not trust his own judgement, had put the problem before his community and left them to settle it in his absence. They decided that Bartholomew should not be treated as the Rule laid down, because he had not been expelled in the proper way.[153]

To Robert, recently appointed as abbot of Dunes after its affiliation to Clairvaux, Bernard regretted that he had had to go there, but took heart from the fact that they were united in spirit.[154] God would keep them together, because he would "always be present to us and will render us constantly present to each other." Bernard's former secretary, William of Rievaulx, received a wise letter advising him not to take too hard the consecration of William fitzHerbert.[155] It would, Bernard suggested, "ill become our Order and not help our house if it [i.e., William's zeal] were to flare up beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion." He called upon Augustine, who had counselled that when someone has done all they could to resist evil, they had no responsibility for it.[156] He should, therefore, have no scruples about receiving ordination or the sacraments since it is Christ who baptises and conse-

[152] *Rule*, cap. 29, ed. Fry, pp. 226–227.

[153] OSB 6.1, p. 320, n. 1, notes that manuscripts from Clairvaux eliminated this passage, probably thinking it could affect Bernard's chance of canonisation. Nowadays many might think it can only strengthen one's appreciation of him.

[154] Ep. 324: OSB 6.2, p. 354, dated 1138, where it is claimed the letter was written after Bernard had accompanied Robert to Dunes for his installation in April 1138. This does not fit with evidence suggesting that Bernard did not return to France from Italy until June/July of that year; *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 80 above), p. 592; SBO 8, p. 261; J 379, p. 450.

[155] Ep. 353; OSB 6.2, pp. 408–410, dated early 1142; SBO 8, pp. 296–297; J 199, p. 268. James suggested the letter was written after William fitzHerbert had been consecrated, which Bernard's "that archbishop" suggests, i.e., after 26 September 1143; see Norton, *St William* (note 139 above), p. 87.

[156] Sermon 88.19; PL 38:549.

crates, and "we should have to leave this world altogether if we would fly from all the bad men tolerated by the Church."

One letter to John, abbot of Buzay in Brittany, shows someone faced with so many difficulties that he had abandoned his position and left the abbey to live as a hermit.[157] The problems were almost certainly connected with the parsimonious resources with which Duke Conan III had endowed the house. Bernard clearly felt sympathy and expressed himself not as a judge but as one trying to attract him back "by mercy, and the spirit of meekness." He ended his appeal by likening himself to Samuel, hoping that John would not prove another Saul. He will pray for his return, he says: "Come back, my son, come back before I die, that I who have loved you in life may not be separated from you in death!"—words echoing the lament for those passionate friends David and Jonathan (2 Kgs. 1:23).

A very practical problem at Chiaravalle in Northern Italy engaged Bernard when writing to Bruno its abbot.[158] Bruno had been upset by an earlier letter. Now he was told that Bernard had written as he did because he was concerned. he was counselled that he must "keep your word and pay your debts as soon as you can," because otherwise scandal might be aroused among Cistercians and about them.

A final letter to an abbot went to Baldwin, abbot of Rieti, not far from Terni in central Italy.[159] Its background reveals an unusual situation. Baldwin had been trained and professed at Clairvaux but had become abbot of a Benedictine house which wanted to imitate Cistercian customs. It was, perhaps, at an early stage in a process which might have lead to its becoming affiliated to Clairvaux. Some such situation must have excused allowing a process that was specifically forbidden in three successive forms of the *Carta Caritatis*.[160] Even though it does not seem to have been forbidden in the early *Instituta* of the order, it

---

[157] Ep. 233; OSB 6.2, pp. 70–74, dated after May 1145; SBO 8, pp. 105–107; J 312, pp. 382–384. This date may need revision, since André Dufief, *Les Cisterciens en Bretagne XIIe–XIIIe siècles* (Rennes, 1997), pp. 76–77, has shown that Bernard's visit to Buzay may have been earlier. Unfortunately, Dufief had not seen either SBO or OSB, while his book appeared too late for Gastaldelli. I am grateful to Professor Dufief for sending his book to me. The king's passage is also used in Ep. 107.2; see note 21 above.

[158] Ep. 281; OSB 6.2, pp. 242–244, dated 1152; SBO 8, p. 195; J 352, p. 429.

[159] Ep. 201; OSB 6.1, pp. 870–874, dated 1137; SBO 8, pp. 59–61; J 259, pp. 339–340.

[160] *Carta caritatis prior*, cap. 11; *Summa Cartae Caritatis*, cap. 5; *Carta caritatis Posterior*, cap. 5; all in *Le origini cisterciensi: documenti* (note 136 above). See also Waddell, *NLTC*, pp. 407, 450, and 502 (at sentence 33).

does not fit easily with their emphasis about setting bounds for those who might try to become monks within it.[161]

Possibly Bernard agreed to the arrangement because Baldwin himself was a son of a count and brother of Rinaldo, abbot of Monte Cassino. This letter clearly was not the first, since Bernard explained that Baldwin should not judge Bernard's affection for him by the brevity of his letter, since "as the affection of a mother for her only son, so was mine for you when you were with me." Bernard's advice was threefold: that Baldwin should supply his "fellow servants with heavenly bread without stint," that is to preach; that he should practice what he preached; and that he should pray. He concluded by adapting words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, at the end of chapter 13, "and so there are these three: Word, Example, and Prayer, for the greatest of these is prayer."

The final group of 'pastoral' letters is mainly addressed to the pope, Eugenius III. Three concern the unhappiness of Rualene, whom Eugenius and Bernard had persuaded to become abbot of Saint Anastasius when Eugenius gave up the post on being elected pope.[162] The first in time is probably that placed second in the edition, Ep. 259, in which Bernard admitted that Rualene had finally agreed to his move because it was the pope's will, and so he was no longer a servant but a son to the pope. Language portraying Bernard as mother, or sometimes father, to Rualene, dominates the next letter, which ends with Bernard telling the pope that Rualene's letters had made him fear that the unwilling abbot might desert his post. The series concludes with a letter to Rualene himself in which Bernard, while sympathising with him, basically advised him to "be strong in the Lord" and not "kick against the pricks."

Finally, another letter pleaded with the pope to rehabilitate Philip, a supporter of Anacletus during the schism, who, having been elected bishop of Tours, was ejected from that see by Innocent II, after which Anacletus made him archbishop of Taranto in Southern Italy in compensation.[163] Like others on the losing side, he had then been condemned at the Lateran Council of 1139 to be stripped of his priesthood. After a time he had made his way to Clairvaux and been accepted as a

[161] I can find nothing on the problem in Waddell's *NLTC*.

[162] Epp. 258–260; OSB 6.2, pp. 190–196, all dated 1145–48; SBO 8, pp. 167–170; J 331–33, pp. 412–414.

[163] Ep. 257; OSB 6.2, pp. 188–190, dated 1150; SBO 8, pp. 165–166; J 339, pp. 411–412.

monk. In the spring of 1148, when Eugenius spent some days at Clairvaux, Bernard made a first effort to have Philip rehabilitated. Eugenius was inclined to be merciful, but the cardinals were not and would not budge when, as John of Salisbury reported, Bernard and the whole of Clairvaux had pleaded for Philip "on bended knee."[164] Now two years later, Bernard wrote to plead for mercy on the grounds that Philip would be a man useful to the Order and that a dispensation for him "would be of no small benefit to it." No reply from Eugenius survives, but the evidence suggests that Philip was forgiven, since by 1153 he was prior at Clairvaux and in 1156 became abbot at L'Aumône.[165]

Concluding Reflections

These 100 or so letters tell us much about Bernard's attempt to care for his monastic family in attracting some men to join it, in getting others to serve as abbots, and others to make their corporate life possible by giving land, money, or other valuable rights. We read much detail about individuals and communities which is not preserved in other sources, even though in most cases we only have one side of the correspondence. Bernard himself must have gained much information from personal contacts with abbots at the General Chapter, or when the abbots called at Clairvaux on their way to, or from the Chapter, or during the course of his often extensive journeys for many purposes, some not directly connected with his Order but allowing him to visit daughter houses.

These letters combine often very practical advice with spiritual counsel, in which Bernard shows how often he recognised the problems facing possible recruits and was wary about taking in people who might not be strong enough to manage the energetic Cistercian way of life. Such practical sense was not something with which the *Vita Prima* credited him as a young abbot, and must have developed as he gained experience.

His advice in these letters shows someone able to respond to correspondents in a way that answered their needs in an acceptable manner. To one he sent brief and to the point sentences; to another longer

---

[164] *The Historia pontificalis of John of Salisbury*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Edinburgh, 1956), p. 43.

[165] For him as prior and abbot, see OSB 6.2, p. 189, n., and p. 281, n.

and more structured paragraphs, powerfully supported by biblical language. Some examples of devices he used more than once have already been pointed out, but it is worth emphasising that the effect of such a biblical foundation must have often given his words considerable power. That foundation is often harder for us to recognise than for those who first received these letters, because Bernard often moulded the text to suit his purposes, and most of us are not so familiar with the Bible itself. One may take as an example Bernard's use of two parallel passages from Matthew and John.

First the words that Matthew put into Jesus' mouth after he had told the disciples that they were his mother and his brothers: "Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, is my brother, and sister and mother" (12:50). This becomes in the letter to the parents of Geoffrey of Peronne "I will be to him a mother and a father, both a brother and a sister."[166] Bernard also changed John's version of the related episode, occurring at a very different stage of the story, when Jesus is on the cross. "Then he says to Mary and John standing together, 'Woman, behold thy son.' And then he said to his disciple 'Behold your mother'" (19:26–27). This becomes in the letter to Hugh, novice at Le Miroir, after Bernard has directed him to draw life from Christ's wounds "He will be your mother and you will be his son."[167] In both cases the reader is drawn into the biblical event when he recognised where the words originated. In this second case, Leclercq and Rochais failed to recognise the source, and so it lies unrecognised in the Index Biblicus to their edition and in those editions which use their text as their basis.

It is also worth observing that the mothering language which Caroline Walker Bynum studied almost 30 years ago does not often appear in the group of letters studied here.[168] Though it is worth noting that the Johannine passage just mentioned lies behind passages in two other letters, one to Baldwin of Rieti and another concerning Rualene.[169] The Matthew passage, however, appears to have been nowhere else in any of Bernard's works.

---

[166] See following note 27 above.
[167] See following note 141 above.
[168] *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982).
[169] See text following notes 159, 161.

We cannot be sure what considerations moved those who collected his letters together. Did they expect some would read them for private "devotional" purposes, while others, whether abbots, novices, or monks, might read them for help in facing present problems? Perhaps too, at least among the generation alive after Bernard died, collectors probably saw the letters as one way in which the picture of Bernard as a holy man might be passed on. If that were the case, it is striking that some letters showed him acting in a less than typically saintly manner. For example, two groups of letters about men moving from other forms of monastic life to the Cistercian one, those about Drogo and the monk from Flay, show a Bernard who wrote to one offended abbot in a less than candid way and to the other quite rudely. But his own *De Praecepto*, written almost 20 years later, shows that he had come to see that he had not taken the Rule seriously enough. His confession in another letter about how he had treated Bartholomew, his own brother, unjustly, ended with his admission that when he had cooled down, he saw that because of his failure he had to leave the decision about Bartholomew's reinstatement to the community, and not deal with it himself. Here we see no conventional saint, but one capable of learning and changing. These letters, therefore, show us a great deal about Bernard himself, and something significant about those who collected his letters.

Table 1 Clairvaux and her daughter houses

Houses arranged by five year periods from the foundation of Clairvaux. Affiliated houses are in italics.

1113–18	Trois Fontaines	1118	letters
1119–23	Fontenay	1119	letter
	Foigny	1121	letters
1124–28	Igny	1128	letter
	Reigny	1128	
1129–33	Ourscamp	1129	
	Cherlieu	1131	letters
	Bonmont	1131	letter
	Longpont	1132	
	Rievaulx	1132	letters
	Vaucelles	1132	letter

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Houses arranged by five year periods from the foundation of Clairvaux. Affiliated houses are in italics.

1134–38	Winterbach(moved Himmerod 1139)	1134	letter
	Vauclair	1134	letter
	Eberbach	1135	
	Gracedieu	1135	letter
	Fountain	1135	letters
	Hautecombe	1135	letter
	Buzay	1135	letter
	Chiaravalle	1136	letter
	Balerne	1136	
	Aulps	1136	letters
	Noirlac	1136	letter
	Chiaravalle della Colomba	1136	letter
	Auberive	1137	
	La Benisson Dieu	1138	
1139–43	*Les Dunes*	1139	letters
	Casamari	1140	
	L'Arrivour	1140	
	Clairmarais	1140	letters
	Whitland	1140	
	Tre Fontane	1140	letters
	S. Nichola de Mottafilocastro	1140	letters
	La Prée	1141	
	Sobrado	1142	
	Mellifont	1142	letters
	Tarouca	*c.*1143	
	Alvastra	1143	
	Nydala	1143	
	Belle-Perche	1143	
	Valparaiso	1143	
1144–48	Belloc	1144	
	Grandselve	1145	letter
	Villers	1146	
	Boxley	1146	
	Val Richer	1146	
	Savigny	1147	letter
	Margam	1147	
	Aulne	1147	
	La Espina	1147	letters
	Cambron	1148	
	Loos	1148	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Houses arranged by five year periods from the foundation of Clairvaux. Affiliated houses are in italics.

	Longuay	1149	
	Boulancourt	1149	
	Cabuabbas	1149	
	Fontmorigny	1149	
	Aubepierres	1149	
1149–53	Meira	1151–54	
	Clermont	1152	
	Moureilles	1152	
	Mores	1152	letter
	Esrom	1152/3	
	Alcobaca	1153	

Table 2 Types and dates of Bernard's letters to his monastic family

Category	pre 1120	1120s	1130s	1140s	1150–53	undated	Total
A. Recruitment	1	13	6	4	1	6	31
B. Patrons and Benefactors			2	3	4	1	10
C. Foundations and Affiliations	1		10	14			25
D. Other duties: Elections			2	3	1		6
Visitations				2			2
General Chapter		3	2	3	2		10
E. Pastoral		7	7	7	2		23
Totals	2	23	29	36	10	7	107

BERNARD THE WRITER

M.B. Pranger

Language and Style

Writing about the exquisite literary quality of *The Life of Macrina*—a biographical treatise on the death of his sister by the great Greek Church Father, Gregory of Nyssa—its translator Lowther Clark observes: "Should this treatise have been written in the fourth century before rather than in the fourth century after Christ, it would doubtlessly have become one of the world's classics."[1]

A similar statement could be made with regard to the work of Bernard of Clairvaux, in particular his chef-d'oeuvre, *The Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Surely, as we shall see, Bernard's literary qualities have been acknowledged as such, but that does not mean that he has been has been awarded a place in the literary pantheon together with the likes of Augustine, Dante, and Petrarch. Interestingly, this lack of appreciation is not primarily to be found in an anti-religious bias on the part of literary historians, although traces of such prejudice are not to be dismissed out of hand either. It is first and foremost the predominance of classicist normativity as part and parcel of Roman Catholic rhetoric itself—ever since the Counter-Reformation—that has been in the way of taking Bernard for the literary genius is he is. Thus Bernard's 19th-century biographer, writing from a decidedly ecclesiastical point of view, more or less dismissed his hero's literary status by qualifying the 12th century as "an age in which literary taste did not reign supreme,"[2] thereby meaning, I suppose, that measured against the laws of classical-humanistic criteria, Bernard's prose was deemed to be too wild, too associative, and too disorganized to qualify as high literature. Conversely, where Bernard may have been lacking in literary taste and restraint, he could be seen to abound in devotion. It is this emphasis

---

[1] W.K. Lowther Clark, *St Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of St Macrina* (London, 1916).

[2] Elphège Vacandard, *La vie de saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols, 4th ed. (Paris, 1927), 1:475.

on saintliness and devotion that, in line with the historical and hagiographical picture of Bernard as it developed since the late Middle Ages, has been so strong and predominant as to diminish attention to his literary qualities. In modern times this tendency has both persisted and been corrected. It persisted insofar as, for modern interpreters focusing on Bernard as primarily religious, attention to his devotional qualities remained paramount even though, in more modern terms, it increasingly took on the guise of admiration for his psychological acuteness and depth of mind. It has been corrected insofar as, more than ever before, the rhetorical and literary dimensions of Bernard's work have become the object of scholarly scrutiny. In the process it proved hard to reconcile the devotional Bernard with the rhetorical one, as if from the religious perspective he had to be excused for his literary playfulness while, in turn, his rhetorical fireworks needed to be supplemented with elements of devotion. Thus the great Bernard scholar Jean Leclercq, who has done more than anyone else to restore Bernard's image as a writer, can be seen on the one hand bringing to the fore the qualities of Bernardine style while, on the other hand, stressing the saint's sincerity in playing his literary games; it has all to be seen and assessed as serving a higher purpose: "There is more. Bernard is not a man of letters who writes to please his contemporaries and to cultivate his reputation; he is a man of the Church and he exercises his teaching duties. He does not compose literary fiction; he takes sides vis-à-vis problems of doctrine and moral action…"[3]

This urge to distinguish between "literary" and "doctrinal," outward rhetoric and the drive of inner devotion, may run the risk of being anachronistic. As Peter von Moos has pointed out in an article about the *occulta cordis*, the secrets of the heart, "the concept of the *occulta cordis*—the invisibility of the interior I either as a given fact or as a requirement—constitutes in the Middle Ages a model of behaviour that first and foremost highlights silence with regard to the self and self-control," the importance of confession notwithstanding.[4] That the self and its sincerity could be assessed from the outside is part of a later development (as of the 13th century) culminating in the "pathetic

[3] Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1969), p. 32.

[4] Peter von Moos, *Entre Histoire et littérature. Communication et Culture au Moyen Age* (Florence, 2005), p. 589.

sincerity of Jansenists and Jesuits."[5] However that may be, it is clear that the concept of "sincerity" and its concomitant feature of the self have changed throughout the ages and that applying such notions to ancient sources from a modern perspective should take these shifting meanings into account.

As for Bernard's handling of his own "I," it is, as we shall see, all the more fascinating, challenging his interpreter to assess it as part of an ongoing rhetorical and ritual flow of monastic language. In this article I propose to deal with the literary status of the self and self-presentation. In order to lay a firm basis for such a literary assessment and after saying a few more words about the surface level of Bernard's literary technique, I will turn to more theoretical underpinnings of that technique by presenting the concept of *figura* as developed by Erich Auerbach and twist it in such a way that it can be applied to the specific nature of Bernard's monastic writings.

Together with Jean Leclercq, Christine Mohrmann should be mentioned as one of the scholars who has drawn attention to the specific quality of Bernard's style. Leclercq's principle contributions to this issue have been collected in the third volume of his *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits.* Mohrmann has made her mark on this field of studies in her introduction to the second volume of the collected works: "Observations sur la langue et style de Saint Bernard."[6] Both Leclercq and Mohrmann have emphasized the degree to which Bernard's vocabulary, syntax, and style were rooted in the writings of the Latin Church Fathers, in particular, Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome. In this respect Bernard honours indeed his epitheton, "the last of the Fathers." Rather than by the austerity and hypotactic structure of Ciceronian Latin, Bernard's language is characterized by parataxis, antithesis, a figural style, and a fondness for wordplay.[7] As such these are common features of the Latin of Late Antiquity, while, in the case of Christian authors, one should point to distinctly biblical influence as well. To those characteristics should be added the lyric and hymnic

[5] Ibid., p. 606.

[6] *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 2, pp. ii–xxxv. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone. See also Christine Mohrmann, "Observations sur la langue et style de Saint Bernard," in *Etudes sur le Latin des Chrétiens*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1961), pp. 354–367.

[7] Mohrmann, "La langue et le style," p. xxv.

nature of Bernard's prose which, with its rhythms and rimes, turns it sometimes into sheer poetry modelled after the poetry of the Psalms.[8] Thus, when lamenting the death of his brother Gerard, Bernard wraps his grief in lyrical and psalmodic terms:

Infimus corpore eram
Et ille portabat me
Pusillus corde eram
Et confortabat me;
Piger et negligens,
Et excitabat me;
Improvidus et obliviosus
Et commonebat me

In my bodily weakness
He carried me
With my unquiet heart
He comforted me
When lazy and negligent
He spurred me on;
When careless and oblivious
He woke me up.[9]

Whereas this rhythmical "prose turned poetical" would easily fit in within the development of Christian poetry, literary appreciation of this lyricism in its capacity of prose would seem a bit more complicated. It is a well-known fact that, since the patristic era, Christian poetry has developed in a dual mode. On the one hand it continued the metrical tradition of Antiquity and on the other hand it produced a new poetical genre, unknown to classical literature, that freed itself from metrical constraints and employed the liberty of rhythm and rhyme instead. Interestingly, the two genres kept on living peacefully together as is proven, for instance, by the 11th-century poet and bishop, Hildebert of Lavardin, who excelled in both metrical and rhythmical poetry.[10] But one of the advantages in judging the quality of poetry—clarity with regard to its appearance as metrical or rhythmical—was

[8] Ibid., p. xxvii.
[9] *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 26.4; SBO 2, p. 172. Cf. Mohrmann, "La langue et le style," p. xxviii.
[10] Cf. two famous poems by Hildebert, the one (*De Roma*) metrical and the other (*Ierusalem* rhythmical). For a detailed discussion of Hildebert's poetry, see Peter von Moos, *Hildebert von Lavardin 1056–1133* (Stuttgart, 1965).

conspicuously lacking when it came to judging the quality of prose. While for Mohrmann and Leclercq Bernard's prosaic lyricism apparently should be classified in positive terms and as part and parcel—a culmination even—of a long Christian tradition, for the likes of Elphège Vacandard that same lyricism turned out to be too immoderate and too exemplary of an age "in which literary taste did not reign supreme."[11] And it is safe to assume that, according to the norms and criteria of Vacandard as well as the long humanistic tradition his judgment represents, "a lack of literary taste" came down to a lack of stylistic and rhetorical restraint. The tenacity of this normative tradition shows through in some ambiguities in Leclercq's appreciation of Bernard's style. While being aware of its exuberance and its use of firework effects, he nevertheless seems to feel the need—as if apologizing to Vacandard—to stress Bernard's stylistic simplicity and restraint:

> But, compared to many writers from Late and Antiquity and the Middle Ages Bernard displays taste and restraint (*de goût et de mesure*). Generally speaking, he avoids affectation and exaggeration, excessive modesty and everything that might look like a cliché. His originality entirely consists in maintaining his freedom applying a literary technique that is highly developed and that, with other authors, would result in complexity. He is the equal of the greatest because he remains simple.[12]

Mohrmann, for her part, feels less compelled to stress Bernard's stylistic simplicity:

> In fact, Bernard's style is far from being simple or austere and Gilson[13] is right in observing with great subtlety that the walls of his monasteries were barren, yet his style was not… His style is vivid, nervous, and, on occasion, grippingly energetic. But sometimes it gives the impression of displaying over-ornamentation and a baroque exuberance.[14]

As might be expected, medieval appreciation of Bernard's literary skills concentrated on his mastery of the various rhetorical genres. But

---

[11] Elphège Vacandard, *Vie de Saint Bernard, abbé de Clairvaux*, 2 vols, 4th ed. (Paris, 1927), 1:475.

[12] Leclercq, *Recueil*, 3:31.

[13] Etienne Gilson, *La théologie mystique de Saint Bernard* (Paris, 1947), pp. 81–82.

[14] Mohrmann, "La langue et le style," p. ix. By using the word *baroque*, even Mohrmann seems to have a slight problem with Bernard's supposed lack of stylistic restraint. This is all the more interesting since, in a famous volte-face, Henri-Irénée Marrou, in his *retractio* (1948) added as an appendix to the re-edition of his *Saint Augustin et la Culture Antique* (Paris, 1938), apologized for having applied the notion "baroque" to characterize the exuberance of Augustine's style.

neither did the problem of measure and restraint go unnoticed albeit without the negative connotations so characteristic of later judgements. In addition to the admiration of rhetorical skills, it was Bernard's brilliant incorporation of the language of Scripture that caught the eye of medieval schoolmasters. In his *De arte praedicandi* (1322), Robert of Basevorn sums up the qualities of Bernardine eloquence as follows:

> Now it should be realized that this method is without measure (*modus sine modis*), exceeding the style and capability of almost all men of genius. He more than the rest stresses Scripture in all her sayings, so that scarcely one statement is his own which does not depend on an authority in the Bible or a multitude of authorities. His procedure is always devout, always artful. He takes a certain theme or something in the place of it—i.e., some matter which he intends to handle—and begins it artfully, divides it into two, three or many members, confirms it, and ends it, using every rhetorical color so that the whole work shines with a double glow, earthly and heavenly; and this, as it seems to me, invites to devotion those who understand more feelingly, and helps more in the novel methods we are now discussing.[15]

What is striking in this passage is the comprehensive appreciation of Bernard's language and style: the combination of "devout" and "artful." It goes without saying that technical mastery of rhetorical tropes figures prominently such as the dividing up of the discourse elegantly and artfully; a method to be described as being "without measure." By that Basevorn does not mean a baroque (or romantic) excess of eloquence. "*Modus sine modis*/method without measure" rather alludes to Bernard's definition of the love of God in his *De diligendo deo* (*On loving God*) in which the true love of God is described as *modus sine modo*.[16] At the same time there seems to be a seamless blend

[15] Robert of Basevorn, *De arte praedicandi*, ch. 12, ed. Th.-M. Charland, *Artes praedicandi: contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au Moyen Age* (Paris and Ottawa, 1936), trans. Leopold Krul in James J. Murphy, ed., *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts* (Berkeley, 1971), p. 131. "Modo de Bernardo. Sciendum quod modus eius est sine modis, modum excedens et capacitatem fere omnium ingeniorum, qui prae omnibus in omnibus dictis Scripturarum inculcat, ut vix sit una sententia quae ex auctoritate Bibliae vel multis auctoritatibus non dependeat. Hic semper devote, semper artificialiter procedit. Aliquod thema certum, vel aliquid loco thematis, id est materiam aliquam quam intendit tractare, accipit, quod artificialiter introducit, dividit nunc in duo membra, nunc in tria, nunc in plura, confirmat, concludit, omni utens colore rhetorico, ut totum opus utraque redolentia refulgeat, saeculari scilicet et divina, quae, ut mihi videtur, magis motive intelligentes ad devotionem invitat et in curiositatibus novis, de cuius nunc est sermo, magis ministrat."

[16] *De diligendo deo* 1.1; SBO 5, p. 119.

with the presence of Scripture inside the flow of discourse. Yet that presence is not as self-evident as it seems. For Bernard "stressing Scripture in all her sayings" does not come down to a literal repetition of those sayings, nor does it coincide with the listing of those sayings in the service of authoritative argumentation as became increasingly customary in scholastic discourse. Even though it may also go back to the way the Church Fathers had handled Scripture, Bernard's own method provides his discourse with an extra layer of subtlety, so to speak, by slightly twisting scriptural language while maintaining its flavour. Robert of Basevorn, for one, has pointedly described this twist as follows:

> We speak of an allusion when Scripture is touched upon without being quoted as such, but not in same way as it has been written down, but while changing the subject or the grammatical case… We speak of inculcation when this happens on many occasions or continuously. It is the blessed Bernard in particular who has made use of those rhetorical colors.[17]

The twist of changing subject and grammatical case, signalled here by Robert of Basevorn, is of the utmost importance for understanding Bernard the writer. For, apart from the fact that this twist in *persona* and grammatical case could concern anybody and everybody, as for instance in Christian liturgy and hymnology, Bernard can be seen as the champion of twisting the *persona* so as to coincide with himself, both as an author and believer; a process in which the "they," the "you," and the "we" are being absorbed by the "I." This is another way of saying that, although shifts in subject and grammatical case are part and parcel of the Christian, exegetical tradition, Bernard lends a special twist to this procedure. It is not so easy, however, to pinpoint exactly what this shift looks like. To further assess its nature, we have to delve a bit into the more theoretical aspects of Bernard's literary technique.

---

[17] Robert of Basevorn, *De arte praedicandi*, ch. 50. "Allusio est quando Scriptura tangitur, non allegatur, sed non eodem modo quo scripta est, sed mutatur vel persona vel casus… Inculcatio est quando hoc fit multum in pluribus vel continue. Quibus coloribus praecipue usus est beatus Bernardus."

Figura

Let me begin with an anecdote. In a conversation about Bernard, Christine Mohrmann once told me the following story. During the funeral mass in the Church of Saint John Lateran, celebrated for the Italian politician Aldo Moro, so cruelly murdered by the Red Brigade, Pope Paul VI was about to say a prayer for his deceased friend. Deeply moved, he started out by confessing that he was at a loss for words. Subsequently he expressed his impotence in the guise of a striking literary image by imploring God to remove the stone that was closing off the tomb of his mouth. The point Mohrmann wanted to make was a general one about what she called the literary liveliness and flexibility of the "Mediterranean" mind—stretching as far as Burgundian Bernard of Clairvaux[18]—represented here by the pope's rephrasing of the old modesty topos (being at a loss for words when starting a discourse) while recreating it as an expression of authentic grief. Here we have a man, not particularly known for his public eloquence, who with one stroke succeeds in blending the bathos of sorrow and the resulting "word that is lacking" (*Das Wort das mir fehlt*), with the act of appropriating voice. In that act "the stone closing off the tomb' became *his* stone. Standing before the congregation it was his "I," however ritual and representative of all present, that coincided with the solitude of stony death. Deep inside his speechlessness the pinnacle of hope lies hidden: the miracle, to be hoped and prayed for, of the stone being removed from the tomb. That is how this little prayer comes full circle.

Clearly, Pope Paul's scriptural hesitancy and desire is part and parcel of the rhetorical tradition of Christian preaching and commentary in which the *persona* of the preacher enters the text he is preaching about or commenting on in order to come out dressed in its garments carrying his listener and reader along in the act. Broadly speaking, this procedure is a matter of metaphor condensed into metonymy and, further, into tropology; mystical tropology, that is, as Henry de Lubac has coined it.[19] In that very process the borderlines between the preacher and his subject-matter are blurred to the extent that the former takes up his position inside the text proper. Rupert of Deutz,

---

[18] Mohrmann, in her "La langue et le style" (p. xii), even uses the phrase *cette exubérance bourguignonne*.

[19] Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Ecriture*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1959), p. 583 ss.

for one, has expressed this move in scriptural terms borrowed from the Genesis story of Jacob's fight with the angel:

> And when Jacob had risen at dawn, after he had sent over the brook all that he had, he stayed behind alone. And behold, a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he said to him: "Let me go, for the day breaketh." He replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And blessing him, he said "If you have prevailed against God, how much more will you prevail against men!" According to this example that man lets himself be overpowered by the other man as often as the investigating and faithful mind encircles the Word of God in order to extort out of it the blessing of the Holy Spirit. That blessing is the true and useful understanding of Scripture's secrets marked by God to be recognized by reason in order to prevent Scripture to be grasped in an easy way because jewels should not be given to the swine. And that man (that is, God, Scripture) is not overcome by the kind of difficulty that would make him desist, until he be grasped, although the word of God somehow flees and orders that it be released.[20]

Yet the problem of literary flexibility personified by the preacher—and reader—taking on the shape of Scripture itself is much more problematic than we tend to realize. To put it differently, the fact that we recognize quite effortlessly the pope's speechlessness in terms of the tombstone as well as Rupert's speech in terms of Jacob's fight may conceal the underlying problem that the identity of both the preacher and reader is, in fact, much less self-evident than the mystical tropology of scriptural identification would seem to suggest. What we face here are the intricacies of typology or, to use Erich Auerbach's favourite concept, *figura*. As Auerbach had pointed out, Christian typology stands out for its being historical, and as such it can be seen as the cradle of western realism as brought to perfection in the 19th- and 20th-century novel. Now one of the characteristics of *figura* is its bipolarity: there

[20] "Cumque mature surrexisset Jacob, traductis omnibus, quae ad se pertinebant, remansit solus: et ecce vir luctabatur cum eo usque mane. Qui cum videret, quod eum superare non posset, dixit ad eum: 'Dimitte me, jam enim ascendit aurora.' Respondit: 'Non dimittam te, nisi benedixeris mihi.' Et benedicens illi: 'Si contra Deum,' inquit, 'fortis fuisti, quanto magis contra homines praevalebis.' Secundum illud exemplum, vir ille adhuc sese a colluctante patitur vinci quoties studiosus et fidelis animus tandiu versatur circa verbum Dei, donec extorqueat ab illo benedictionem Spiritus sancti, quae est verus et utilis intellectus mysterii, vel Scripturae quam Deus rationabiliter signavit, ut non facile possit apprehendi: 'Quia margaritae non erant mittendae coram porcis,' et nulla difficultate vincitur, ut desistat, donec apprehendatur, quamvis quodammodo fugiat sermo Dei, seque jubeat dimitti." *Rupertus Tuitiensis Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*, ed. H. Haacke, Corpus Chistianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 26 (Turnhout, 1974), pp. 4–5.

are two poles, one on each side of the "equation," each with its own claim of historicity, while at the same time the one is signified by the other. Auerbach himself describes the workings of *figura* as follows:

> Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfils the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures are within time, within the stream of historical life. Only the understanding of the two persons or events is a spiritual act, but this spiritual act deals with concrete events whether past, present, or future and not with concepts or abstractions; these are quite secondary, since promise and fulfillment are real historical events, which have either happened in the incarnation of the Word, or will happen in the second coming. Of course purely spiritual elements enter into the conceptions of the ultimate fulfillment since "my kingdom is not of this world"; yet it will be a real kingdom, not an immaterial abstraction; only the *figura*, not the *natura* of this world will pass away, and the flesh will rise again. Since in figural interpretation one things stands for another, since one thing represents and signifies the other, figural interpretation is "allegorical" in the widest sense. But it differs from most of the allegorical forms known to us by the historicity both of the sign and what it signifies.[21]

In my view Auerbach should be applauded for bringing out the historical dimensions of typology, thereby breaking through the uneasy truce between the spiritual and historical aspects of Christianity and bringing to the fore its intrinsically realistic and secular nature. Yet the passage just quoted abounds with such a number of baffling complexities that leaving them unquestioned would be irresponsible. How, for instance, can a signifier be squared with the signified while both remain independent historical facts? How, if at all, does the signifier, survive this long divorce over time between itself and the signified? What about the sustainability of the sign and, retrospectively, of the signifier? How exactly does time function in this scheme? For Auerbach past, present, and future are as concrete as events themselves and so are promise and fulfilment. But who is responsible for drawing those lines and keeping up those distinctions? Sustainability again? What about the spiritual act of understanding events that do not cease to be concrete?

---

[21] Erich Auerbach, "Figura," *Archivum Romanicum* 22 (1938), pp. 436–489, trans. in Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Gloucester Mass., 1959, repr. 1973), p. 54.

Admittedly, Auerbach has somehow shown to be aware of those problems by pointing out the difference between the modern view of "event" as "always self-sufficient and secure, while the interpretation is fundamentally incomplete," whereas "in the figural interpretation the fact is subordinated to an interpretation which is fully secured to begin with: the event is enacted according to an ideal model which is the prototype situated in the future and thus far only promised."[22] Yet the event is at the same time "already fulfilled in God" turning *figura* into "the tentative form of something and timeless." One might wonder whether Auerbach's concept of events as always "self-sufficient and secure" is not too naive to be true, although one can understand that he needs hard-core and irreducible facts in order to make his point. Without it his *figura* would collapse. Yet in my view the major flaw in his argument is a lack of reciprocity between the two events or persons in time, which is not covered by the fact that the first signifying person or event not only signifies the second but also itself. This lack of reciprocity is further enhanced by Auerbach's rather linear use of temporality as moving from promise to fulfilment. Of course, there is no denying that this is precisely what the basic Christian scheme of history looks like. However, that is not all there is to it. In my view, for history and time to be sustainable, promise and future have to extend not only forwards but also backwards.

For temporality and history to be sustainable there must be a present moment that, in spite of its unfathomable nature, governs time from the beginning to the end and vice versa. Embarking, in his *Sermones super Cantica*, on the long—16 sermons long, to be precise—journey toward the *osculum oris*, the kiss of the mouth, Bernard initially pities the arch-fathers whose burning desire to see Christ in the flesh was not yet to be fulfilled. However, he at once overturns that suspense by the introduction of a *perfectus*, that is, one of those people of old who refused to live any longer in expectation and forces the present of fulfilment to materialize here and now. This person wants to have none of delay and suspense, none of "prophecies, visions and dreams" but goes exclusively for the real thing, Jesus Christ:

> What do I care for those streams of words uttered by the Prophets? I would much rather be kissed by the handsomest of men. *Let he himself kiss me with the kiss of his mouth*. I refuse to listen to Moses any

[22] "Figura," in Auerbach, *Scenes*, pp. 59–60.

> longer for he suffers too much of a speech impediment. Isaiah's lips are unclean, Jeremiah does not know how to speak up because he is a young boy. In fact, all prophets are poor speakers. He himself, he whom they speak about, let himself speak. *Let he himself kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.* He speaks to longer to me in them or through them because they are "a watery darkness, a dark cloud." But *may he himself kiss me with the kiss of his mouth* whose gracious presence and streams of admirable teaching may turn me into a fountain rising up to life eternal. He has been anointed by the Father with the oil of gladness in preference to his peers. Is that not a reason why out of him affluent grace should be poured out on me, if he only holds me worthy of the *kiss of his mouth*? For to me his living and efficient word is a kiss, not so much a joining of the lips which sometimes belies the picture of peaceful co-existence of souls, but rather it is infusion of joy, revelation of secrets, in one way or another a miraculous and somehow seamless mingling of light from above with the illuminated mind. For he who adheres to God is one spirit. I therefore rightly refuse to accept any more visions and dreams, I do not want any more symbols and riddles. I even get tired of the pretty shape of angels. My Jesus surpasses them in stature and beauty. I do not ask for anyone else, no angel, no man, but only for himself to *kiss me with the kiss of his mouth*.[23]

Now this refusal of delay and the establishment of a present seems to be pretty close to the "ideal and timeless" model Auerbach inserts into his figural scheme, and if there is any difference it is one of subtlety rather than of substance. But it is subtlety I am talking about. First the similarities, then, so beautifully expressed by Auerbach in characterization of Dante:

---

[23] "Dicebat enim perfectus quisque: 'Quo mihi ora haec seminiverbia prophetarum? Ipse potius speciosus forma prae filiis hominum, ipse me osculetur osculo oris sui. Non audio jam Moysen: impeditioris siquidem linguae factus est mihi (Ex. 4:10). Isaiae labia immunda sunt (Is. 6:5), Ieremias nescit loqui, quia puer est (Ier. 1:6): et prophetae omnes elingues sunt. Ipse, ipse, quem loquuntur, ipse loquatur; ipse me osculetur osculo oris sui. Non in eis iam aut per eos loquatur mihi, quoniam tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Ps. 17:12); sed ipse me osculetur osculo oris sui, cujus gratiosa praesentia, et admirandae fluenta doctrinae fiant in me fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam. Quem unxit Pater oleo laetitiae prae consortibus suis (Io. 4:14; Ps. 44:8), nunquid non ex ipso mihi uberior infunditur gratia? si tamen dignetur me osculari osculo oris sui. Cujus utique sermo vivus et efficax (Hebr. 4:12) osculum mihi est, non quidem conjunctio labiorum, quae interdum pacem mentitur animorum, sed plane infusio gaudiorum, revelatio secretorum, mira quaedam et quodam modo indiscreta commixtio superni luminis et illuminatae mentis. Adhaerens quippe Deo unus spiritus est (1 Cor. 6:17). Merito proinde visiones et somnia non recipio, figuras et aenigmata nolo, ipsas quoque angelicas fastidio species. Quippe et ipsos longe superat Jesus meus specie sua et pulchritudine sua. Non ergo alium sive angelum, sive hominem, sed ipsum peto osculari me osculo oris sui.'" *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 2.1–2; SBO 1, pp. 8–9.

> Both figure and fulfillment possess the character of actual historical events and phenomena. The fulfillment possesses it in greater and more intense measure, for it is, compared with the figure, *forma perfectior*. This explains the overwhelming realism of Dante's beyond… This enables us to understand that the beyond is eternal and yet phenomenal; that it is changeless and of all time and yet full of history. It also enables us to show in what way this realism in the beyond is distinguished from every type of purely, earthly realism. In the beyond man is no longer involved in any earthly action or entanglement, as he must be in an earthly representation of human events. Rather, he is involved in an eternal situation which is the sum and the result of all his actions and which at the same time tells him what were the decisive aspects of his life and character…[24]

There is, however, a problem with this kind of realism, or, rather with realism *tout court*, and that is the scattered nature of the reality thus produced. The vertical nature of *figura*, while guaranteeing the historicity of events, and, more particularly, the process of one event or person signifying not only itself but also another event of person, at the same time, by definition, leaves events or persons for what they are scattered all over the place. That, in a sense, is the condition on which they can be connected. Although based on divine order and planning and owing fulfilment to that very order, *figura* is not concerned with the latter's visibility but, rather, focuses on the visibility of the full event itself. Auerbach senses as much when pointing to the radical effects of Dante's realism: "The image of man eclipses the image of God. Dante's work made man's Christian-figural being a reality, and destroyed it in the very process of realizing it."[25] Analogously, this is how 19th- and 20th-century realism has broken down, as Auerbach demonstrates in his chapter on the fragmented, scattered language of Virginia Woolf, without fully realizing, by the way, the fact that this demise is not so much a result of literary decline but is based on the vitality of *figura* as it had once flourished even more freely than Auerbach's own definition would seem to allow for. And so we are back at the original definition of *figura* with the problematic and shaky relationship between signifier and signified, sign and event. The next question is: how does *figura* affect the scene of the praying pope or, for that matter, Bernard's refusal to postpone the *osculum oris*?

---

[24] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1953), p. 197.

[25] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 202.

The Persona *of the Preacher*

After having established a theoretical base for Bernard's literary technique, we can now have a closer look at the way in which he put into practice the principles of rhetoric and scriptural appropriation as described by Robert of Basevorn. In the passage from the second sermon on the Song of Songs about the patriarchs' longing for the advent of Christ, we have already seen the technique of inculcation at work. The enchanting repetition of the "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth" intensified the desire of the patriarchs to such a desire that the reader was made part of, and absorbed by, it. Let us now look at the way the "I" of the preacher/writer approaches the text to the extent of turning himself into one of its protagonists. Proceeding in that way, we trace how subjects are being twisted toward the" I," grammatical cases changed, and words inculcated. In the sermon *In ascensione* 2, Bernard zooms in on the moment at which Christ had completed his earthly duties and is about to leave for heaven:

> Now he has truly fulfilled everything, since he was born among men, has been talking to his fellow-men, suffered at the hands of men and for them, died and has risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is sitting at the right hand of God. I recognize the tunic seamlessly woven in one piece from the top which that heavenly mansion has finished where he has been fulfilled and where the Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled everything.
>
> Why then should those solemnities concern me? Who will comfort me, Lord Jesus, because I have not seen you hanging on the cross, discoloured by bruises, pale as a result of death. For I have not suffered together with him who was crucified, have not followed him into death so as at least to soothe with my tears those marks of his wounds. Why have you left me without greeting me when, King of glory? Handsome in your shining dress you welcomed yourself in the high heavens. There is no way that my soul had been willing to be consoled but for the fact that the angels had been there first telling me with a shout of joy: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you to heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."[26]

[26] "Nunc vere adimplevit omnia quia natus est inter homines, cum hominibus conversatus est, ab hominibus et pro hominibus passus et mortuus est, resurrexit, ascendit, sedet ad dexteram Dei. Agnosco tunicam desuper contextam per totum, quam superna illa mansio claudit, ubi adimpletus est, et adimplevit omnia Dominus Iesus Chirstus.

If we momentarily discard with a reading of this passage from the viewpoint of Bernardine devotion, so new in its emphasis on the personal experience of Christ and his suffering, we have a hard nut to crack: what to make of the *figura*-aspects of this scene? For *figura* there is, to begin with, the *persona* of the preacher disguised as one of the apostles. He has crept into the biblical scenes, so to speak, making himself part and parcel of what is going on inside the text. Admittedly, the objection could be made that what Bernard does is not so much use *figura* as, rather, appropriate the text and its voice in his capacity of preacher and reader. If I insist on calling this procedure *figura*, it is because Bernard, in the very act of preaching and reading, operates by way of establishing himself in front of his audience as having himself been signified as preacher by a person who has been signified already in the original text, thus in a sense fulfilling the text in the act of re-enactment—or, perhaps, the other way around: being fulfilled by the text in the act of re-enactment.

Little difference does it make if this time Bernard takes on the modest *figura* of a bystander. His work abounds with other, more ambitious "figurations," such as his acting out the *sponsus*/Christ himself. Nor does it matter very much that Bernard's human frailty even as preacher would seem to lack the aura of perfection that is required in order to make effective the second part of *figura* signified by the first. What counts is the fact that, in view of the bipolarity of *figura*, one of the poles functions as the *forma perfectior* of the other (*pace* Dante), although—and that is the crux of the matter—it may not always be clear which side of the *figura* represents the *forma perfectior* and when. Or, to put it even more radically, why should not history, as mentioned above, move backwards and why should not there be full reciprocity, *formae perfectae*? The history of *figura* is replete with it. Thus Joyce's *Ulysses* is a *figura* of Homer's *Odyssey*. But the two are on a par to the extent that they can, in a sense, be called reciprocal.

Verumtamen quid mihi et sollemnitatibus istis? Quis me solabitur, Domine Iesu, quia non te vidi cruce suspensum, plagis lividum, pallidum morte, quia non sum crucifixo conpassus, obsecutus mortuo, ut saltem lacrimis meis loca illa vulnerum delinirem? Quomodo me dereliquisti insalutatum, cum, formosus in stola tua, Rex gloriae, in alta caelorum te recipisti? Prorsus renuisset consolari anima mea, nisi me angeli in voce exultationis praevenissent, qui et dixerunt: VIRI GALILAEI, QUID STATIS ASPICIENTES IN CAELUM? HIC IESUS QUI ASSUMPTUS EST A VOBIS IN CAELUM, SIC VENIET QUEMADMODUM VIDISTIS EUM EUNTEM IN CAELUM (Acts 1:11)." *In ascensione sermo* 2.34; SBO 5, pp. 128–129.

If we have a closer look at the Bernardine passage, we are struck by the multidimensionality of its infrastructure, which prevents the reader from getting a firm grip on it. The setting is the *pompa*, the solemn procession of Christ toward heaven, of Christ alone, that is, who leaves his disciples behind in the act. There follows a kind of oxymoron, a paradox at least: Christ's triumphant new position in heaven marks his remoteness and, more alarming still, his inapproachability. Here the oxymoron shows itself: it is now fulfilment that threatens to absorb Christ's past on earth, symbolized by the tunic in one piece from the top, the tunic, that is, in which the suffering Christ was dressed by the soldiers. Its very seamlessness now blocks any further vision and communication, producing a presence that is bittersweet, mute, and eloquent. In a rhetorical attempt to disentangle this oxymoron Bernard twists the affection and directness with which he as preacher so often maneuvers himself to the forefront of biblical events, not least the passion of Christ. From the perspective of Christ's Ascension, his leaving without saying goodbye to the preacher also deprives the latter of any presence at the preceding events of his suffering. He just was not there when they crucified the Lord, and the resulting sadness would remain inconsolable if the angels had not told him, as one of the "men of Galilee," that Christ would come back in the same manner as he had left the scene.

Let us now have a closer look at the order of events. Clearly, this passage is based on a promise, a promise of return. However, return being the exact reverse copy of departure ("he will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven"), the entire event can never again function as a one-dimensional pole of *figura* connecting that event with a more perfect one, a *forma perfectior*. What breaks down here is Auerbach's construct of *figura* of an event that "is enacted according to an ideal model which is the prototype situated in the future and thus far only promised." As a result, the sequel of this promise also breaks down: the fact, that is, that the same event is "already fulfilled in God" turning *figura* into "the tentative form of something eternal and timeless." Bernard's version is much more radical than that. There is just no bi-polarity. By blending coming and going he establishes a *figura* that comprises past and future because it is based on a present that is not a prototype or a model but a reality. For there is nothing tentative about the "tunic in one piece" that dominates the scene and conditions any speaking, as well as any loss of speaking, while producing the intensity of presence by means of emphasizing the preacher's absence at the event.

Once this blending of coming and going is in place, it becomes possible to see how the order of events is lifted without becoming arbitrary or, for that matter, changing from the viewpoint of revised temporality. In a sense, Bernard takes to the letter the promise of the angels that Christ will come back as they have seen him leave. For now we can read that promise back into the preceding lines about Christ already being in heaven having fulfilled and finished everything and the resulting non-commitment on the part of Bernard in those pomp and circumstances ("what does it concern me?"). Subtly he gears back from the pomp of ascension to the period when Christ was still conversing with men (*cum hominibus conversatus est*). For from the viewpoint of the *solemnitas* of ascension and Bernard's subsequent bereavement, all he can say about the passion of Christ is that, as far as he, Bernard, is concerned, he has not been present on the spot. Besides being sheer rhetoric meant to foreground Christ's passion in realistic terms, this is a subtle way of taking revenge for not being greeted by Christ on his way out, of living the Ascension to the full by reading and living history in the reverse and mirroring Christ's absence as a result of his leaving in the preacher's absence at the foot of the cross.

Why, then, do I insist in using *figura* as we have just witnessed the implosion of Auerbach's version? In reply to that question I leave aside the possible benefits of a revised version of *figura* for Auerbach's main thesis in his *Mimesis* and other writings with regard to western realism and *figura's* demise in the course of time. Such a revision would, among other things, imply a modernized reading of ancient and medieval texts whose "authentic" realism, in Auerbach's view, keeps being hampered by the presence of a timeless model or prototype. For now I want to focus on the theme of this article and, consequently, on the anecdotal image of the mute pope: the *persona* of the speechless yet speaking preacher inside his own text. It is my considered opinion that precisely *figura* is fit to bring out the unique position of the preacher, which would otherwise be drowned in an excess of devotional, mystical, doctrinal, or any other reading whatever, all of which would somehow kill the living author and preacher inside it. Without denying that the grand Christian scheme of promise and fulfilment remains in place (nothing new there), also in Bernard's text, the latter's structure is not at all governed by it but, rather, by the movements of the author in which he imitates, and thus fulfils, the movements of Christ himself and, following from that, of any biblical person.

Here it is not grand schemes we are talking about, but little movements and gestures like the one under discussion, the subtle restaging of the *persona* of the preacher, as performing the act of ascension and return. That *persona* is none other than the *figura* of Christ himself, conversing with men, residing in heaven all in one piece, and suffering on earth, all at the same time, "time" meaning the little moment—in Bernard's language the *rara hora*—of Christ coming, going, and coming back (or, for that matter, coming back, going, and coming). Thus the preacher takes on *figura* by restaging history backwards. It is precisely in the outcry "what do these solemnities concern me?" and the subsequent implosion of *figura* as the act of moving "progressively backward" that the promise to the men of Galilee is revived and kept alive: "this Jesus, who has been taken up from you to heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

The Persona *of the Brother*

After we have seen Bernard's "I" move toward biblical protagonists so as to arrogate their voice and become one of them, it would be interesting to see whether or not Bernard the writer has looked for more direct ways of revealing his own self; a self, that is, which has not taken on the shape of a biblical character. In a sense this question is not precise enough, as if it were possible to distil a direct, autobiographical self from the medieval source-material. In that respect we should keep in mind that the medieval "I" differs from the modern self in that it is always part and parcel of a broader, ritual, exemplary, or typological context. So much has become evident already in our discussion of Auerbach's *figura*. However, once medieval authors start talking about their own selves, the temptation to mix up the more formal, exemplary, medieval "I" with the more modern, psychological, and individual self becomes almost irresistible. In that context it is recommended to heed the stern warnings given on this issue by Peter von Moos:

> The inadequate criterion of authentic feeling or originality still pervades all interpretations of medieval works [of art] the majority of which were aimed at collective goals. In studies on medieval literature plenty of biographical and psychological explanations can still be found, tourist excursions, as it were, to the unfamiliar, yet all too familiar regions of the medieval soul. Yet this kind of literature did not know the notion of a lyrical or a biographical I. What it did know was the existence of an

ecce homo: i.e., an exemplary kind of subjectivity comprising all aspects of humankind.[27]

The temptation to forget about the subtle twists inside *figura* which I have been talking about presents itself when Bernard does indeed start talking about himself and his nearest and dearest in what seems to be direct terms.

In the 26th Sermon on the Song of Songs Bernard of Clairvaux suddenly interrupts his running commentary. He is incapable of continuing his exposition, so he admits. Tears about the recent death of his brother Gerard—his representative in practical matters—prevent him from further speaking. So far he had succeeded in containing his tears and sorrow. Gerald's death-bed, the funeral in the monastic cemetery, the liturgy of the dead celebrated by the brother and abbot himself—all those tribulations he had survived without shedding a tear. Unaffected as he seemed by the death of a relative, some of his fellow-brothers had even wondered about his stoic behaviour, criticising him for his coldness. Little did they know about the burning fire of grief he so skilfully had concealed from them and which now forced its way through the system.

After this "emotional" outburst of tears the rest of the sermon consists of an affectionate portrait of Gerard, both when alive and dying, painted by his mourning brother. And although it is difficult to suppress his tears when remembering the deceased, Bernard somehow manages, through the act of reminiscing about the past, to restore the emotional balance which had been so seriously distorted by the brute intrusion of death. And when Bernard concludes his sermon with the prayer that God teach him the measure of his tears, it is clear that grief has run its course. Having pleaded his case of the bereft brother with his heavenly Father, Bernard feels sufficiently relieved now to return in

[27] "Der allgemeine Wandel wissenschaftsmethodischer Leitvorstellungen von der 'Kunst der Interpretation' zur 'Sozialgeschichte der Literatur' hat zwar auch die Mediävistiek erfaszt […] doch das inadäquate Kriterium der Gefühlsechtheit oder Originalität ist noch keineswegs aus allen Interpretationen mittelalterlichen, weitgehend kollektiven Zwecken dienenden Werke verschwunden. Noch immer finden sich biographische und psychologische Erklärungen mittelalterlichen Dichtung und gleichsam 'touristische' Vergnügungsfahrten in das fremde, doch nicht allzu fremde Land der mittelalterlichen Seele angesichts einer Literatur, die weder ein 'lyrisches' noch ein eigentlich biografisches Ich, sonder nur ein *ecce homo*: beispielhalft für die Menschheit sprechende Subjektivität kennt." Peter von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik. Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die historiae im 'Policraticus' Johanns von Salisbury* (Hildesheim, 1988), pp. xlv–xlvi.

the next sermon to his exposition of the Canticle text. So doing, he is no longer the brother momentarily showing traces of natural affection and emotion. Rather, he can be seen to resume his professional duties, once more acting out effortlessly the role of the abbot and preacher.

How should this passage be read? Can we take Bernard at his word when he presents himself as spontaneously bursting out into tears? Or do we have to admit that the formal, rhetorical nature of the discourse blocks direct access to Bernard's soul? Looking for an answer to our question, we are faced with the remarkable fact that the nature of our reply will differ according to the historical perspective from which we look at the matter. Seen from a retrospective point of view, Bernard can be considered one of the first theologians in western Christendom who has drawn attention to the emotional aspects in the human experience of the divine. As such his outburst into tears does not necessarily qualify as spontaneously emotional. The interpreter of this text is rather invited to focus on the aspects of form and genre in this lament, as well as on its exemplary, *ecce homo*-like nature which makes it much less instantly accessible for the compassionate reader.

Preference for the first approach seems logical if one focuses on creating a psychological portrait of Bernard. Brian McGuire, for instance, in his book about Bernard, *The Difficult Saint*, is one of the most eloquent spokesmen for such a psycho-historical approach. His comment on Bernard's lament runs as follows:

> Here, as in so much else, Bernard is full of surprises. Certainly Bernard could be a powerbroker and polemicist, but he also lets us see him as a man in contact with his own emotions, able to mould his inner life into a Christian form without denying his natural impulses… In Bernard the West learned the dignity and usefulness of tears and human loss. Bernard realised that sorrow must have a chance to get out of one's system. It cannot remain within forever; human pain needs a means of expression. He chose a public moment in the life of his monastery to proclaim his own witness to faith in God and love for Gerard.[28]

Things become more complicated when scholars who, generally speaking, hold the view that priority should be given to the formal and rhetorical aspects of Bernard's text, all of a sudden and without any argumentation are willing to make an exception for this lament.

---

[28] Brian Patrick McGuire, *The Difficult Saint. Bernard of Clairvaux and His Tradition*, Cistercian Studies Series, 126 (Kalamazoo, 1991), pp. 143–144.

Apparently, in this particular case Bernard's grief can be taken at face value: it is real tears that are being shed. Just as in real life, here we witness the timidity on the part of the onlookers—or, for that matter, the reader—to bother someone mourning over the death of a beloved one. There are such moments in life when it seems inappropriate to point to the fact that there is no nature without artifice, no emotion without a form and setting.

So much about reading Bernard from a retrospective point of view. But what about the historical view? Peter von Moos, for one, has vehemently protested against psychological readings of Bernard's lament. In his book *Consolatio* he has analysed with great precision and enormous erudition the rhetorical structure of Bernard's Sermon 26 on the Song of Songs, demonstrating, among many other things, to which extent this text, for all its spontaneity, leans heavily on its patristic predecessors such as Augustine's *Confessions* and Ambrose's lament for his deceased brother. Moreover, Von Moos's analysis lays bare a structure in Bernard's text which closely resembles Nico Frijda's concept of the "fundamental dimensions of emotions."[29] First there is the admission of the fact that one is overcome by grief (in terms of Frijda: "appraisal" of the situation). Next there is the "state of action readiness," in Bernard's case, the willingness to abandon further suspension of one's grief as it manifested itself in the inability or refusal to shed tears. Once the first step has been taken, one gradually comes to grips with one's sorrow. A process of regulation has been set in motion which culminates in the mourner's somehow coming to terms with his grief.

What are we to think about those two approaches, which seem to be not only different from one another but also incompatible and mutually exclusive? Can the historian afford to ignore the emotional impact of what the author himself presents as authentic feelings? Let us look at so undeniably realistic an exclamation of anger and grief on the part of the bereft brother Bernard.

> Some people tell me to stop weeping? My heart has been torn out. Does that give reason to tell me: do not feel it? Whether I want or not, I do indeed feel it, for my strength is not tough and my heart is not stony

[29] Nico Frijda, *The Emotions. Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction* (Cambridge, 1986). Cf. Peter von Moos, *Consolatio. Studien zur Mittellateinischen Trostlitteratur über den Tod und zum Problem der christlichen Trauer*, 4 vols (Munich, 1971, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 324–327.

> and my flesh is not made of steel… As far as my feelings are concerned, I have told you everything and there is nothing I have concealed from you. So, you want to call me carnal? I do not deny being human nor do I deny that being a man. And if that is not enough, I have no reason to deny that I am carnal as well…[30]

The conclusion seems simple: this *cri de coeur* fully confirms the legitimacy of McGuire's way of reading. Yet, in my view, the second, "historical" approach as described by von Moos preconditions—or should precondition—any attempt the reader makes to enter into contact with Bernard's emotions. Saying this, I do not mean, of course, to deny that the tears Bernard shed over the death of his brother were real, nor do I want to deprive him or the reader of his expression of personal grief. What I do reject, however, is the view that we here face a man "in contact with his own emotions, able to mould his inner life into a Christian form without denying his natural impulses."[31]

The problem lies not in the existence of natural impulses as such but, rather, in the identification of those impulses with emotions as they figure in literary texts. Such an equation fails, in my view, to do justice to the subtle structure of Bernard's text. It is precisely this subtlety that tends to mislead the reader searching for directness, spontaneity, and authenticity. The reader is seduced by Bernard to take him at his word: the great saint admits to being human, or, as he puts it himself in Terence's words: "nothing human is alien to me." Just like the majority of his fellow men he is unable to ban human passions, be it joy or grief, altogether from his life. However, once the passage just quoted is situated within the context of the entire sermon, the text appears not to say what it says.

First we have to account for the fact that apparently Bernard, who was in the process of revising his Sermons on the Song of Songs until the day of his death, saw no reason to remove from the series the interruption of his discourse by his spontaneous outburst into tears. In fact, the very interruption of his commentary on what ultimately is to be characterised as nothing but a collection of bridal poetry by a lament

---

[30] "…et dicitur mihi: 'Ne fleveris?' Avulsa sunt viscera mea a me, et dicitur mihi: 'Ne senseris' Sentio, sentio vel invitus, quia nec fortitudo lapidum fortitudo mea, nec caro mea aenea est… Affectum confessus sum, et non negavi. Carnalem quis dixerit? Ego humanum non nego, sicut nec me hominem. Si ne hoc sufficit, nec carnalem negaverim…" *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 26.9; SBO 1, p. 177.

[31] McGuire, *The Difficult Saint*, p. 143.

was severely criticised by contemporary literary scholars. In their view Bernard had sinned against Horace's law as stated in the *Ars poetica* against the mixture of genres.[32] By mixing the lyric genre of love poetry with the elegiac genre of funeral orations he had in a sense made a mess of it. That, however, would not entitle him to being called "emotional" and "authentic" straightaway. Consequently, Bernard's insertion of his lament into his Canticle-sermons introduces in his text an element of distance and incongruity that cannot be easily ignored. Second, the passage just quoted, just like the entire lament, contains so many monastic connotations that the reader is prevented from taking literally the human—all too human—nature of Bernard's grief.

The fact that Bernard's is not a stony heart, the fact that, just like any other human being, he has emotions and fears death—both his own and the death of his friends and relatives—may lend him a human face. But first and foremost, those confessions must be appreciated against the backdrop of the monastic context. It is the monks whose profession it is to weep in an uninterrupted rite of penance. It is their tears which are supposed to melt down the stony heart and bring about relief and consolation. If they then hear their abbot admit to his being just human, these fellow-monks cannot fail to catch the monastic ring of that exclamation. On this special occasion they watch their abbot operate like an acrobat when he keeps the routine of monastic preaching going while simultaneously interrupting its monotony and electrifying it by pretending, overwhelmed by grief in an almost theatrical fashion, temporarily to suspend the technical-professional continuity of the monastic rite.

It is, however, precisely in this suspense that Bernard shows himself to be, and to remain, the monastic man he is. For, in the end, what counts for the monk is not the natural weakness of man, which is nicely illustrated by the tears men shed about the death of his beloved ones: "many tears, little profit," so Bernard succinctly describes the human condition, just to add condescendingly to this remark that those are the ways of the world. The monastic concern is quite different: there weakness means that man is sold under sin. To get out of this stony desert a more powerful, monastic, and ritual language is required. That language is so strong that it can absorb the "natural"

[32] M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 177–178.

grief which had briefly interrupted the monastic routine in order to transform it into the tears of the *officium flendi* and lead it back to the continuous mediation on the biblical love-song to which it had not ceased to be linked.

Measure and the Opposing Self

At the end of Sermon 26 on the Song of Songs, Bernard, after having gone through a "natural" excess of grief, raises the problem of measure, the measure of tears, that is. "Tears indicate the end of words. May it please you, o Lord, to indicate their end and measure."[33] So far we have been dealing with Bernard's rhetoric and style as the firm basis, not of his romantic authorial genius but, rather, of his skills to shift subject and grammatical case within the flow of a Scripture-based discourse. While for many interpreters the problem of rhetorical and stylistic measure (*modus*) apparently has been an issue, if not a cause for worry, Robert of Basevorn's characterization of Bernard's writing skills as *modus sine modis* has stimulated us to look for a more precise assessment of the "twists and shifts of the subject" of the author within his own discourse. Meanwhile Erich Auerbach's notion of *figura* has provided us with a basis, or a centre, from which the author could be seen to position himself at once as a historical person in his own time and a historical person from the (biblical) past. And even in so personal an account as the description of grief over his brother's death, Bernard kept himself firmly within the bounds of his monastic existence and, thereby, within the bounds of the actualisation of what, in monastic terms, used to be called the *paradisus claustralis*, the monastic paradise as the realization of the scriptural presence in the shape of heavenly Jerusalem in the here and now.

All this means that if we look for measure in Bernard it has to be found in the form and nature of his monastic existence. As I have pointed out in more detail elsewhere,[34] it is in the shape of that existence that "measure," both in its literary and existential sense, has to be found. Bernard's asceticism was materially rooted in the wildness of the scenery in which he founded his monasteries; monasteries that,

[33] "Finem verborum indicunt lacrimae; tu illis, Domine, finem modumque iudixeris…" SBO 1, p. 181.

[34] M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought*.

in their turn, are known for the austerity of their architecture. The fact that exuberance and the threat of a life without measure are to be seen as constitutive elements of Bernard's mind-set becomes evident if one takes into account not only the "exuberance" of his style and the exuberance of his behaviour but also the spatial setting of his asceticism. If that is true, we must ask what kind of "I" it was that left the monastery for (church)-political excursions or what kind of "I" it was that meddled in religious disputes and, last but not least, what kind of "I" it was that excelled in polemics and in the satirical genre.

So much is clear, that, whether lamenting his absence from his monastery or attacking, in famous diatribes, either Cluny or Abelard, it all revolved around the issue of measure. For the sake of amusement I quote a passage from Bernard's satirical description of the way in which the monks of Cluny were unable to maintain ascetic standards when it came to food (or images, for that matters, or any sort of comfort). If any of his polemical remarks have become part of the canon of satire it is his description of the variety of recipes for making eggs (as replacement for meat):

> Who can say in how many ways that eggs alone (I won't mention the rest) are beat and buffeted, with how much care they are turned one way and then another, cooked soft, hard, and scrambled? Now they are surfed now fried, now baked, now stuffed, now mixed with other things, and now separately. What is the point of all this, except that the lack of appetite alone is looked after?[35]

Here we seem far removed from any twist in "subject and grammatical case." What we have is a straight, satirical showpiece even though Bernard tries to position his satire within the more serious problem of the boundaries and obligations of the monastic life: a common cause of both Cluny and Cîteaux. Things would seem to look grimmer when satire takes on the guise of personal attacks, as in the controversy with

---

[35] "Quis enim dicere sufficit, quot modis, ut caetera taceam, sola ova versantur et vexantur, quanto studio evertuntur, subvertuntur, liquantur, durantur, diminuuntur, et nunc quidem frixa, nunc assa, nunc farsa, nunc mixtim, nunc singillatim apponuntur? Ut quid autem haec omnia, nisi ut soli fastidio consulatur? Ipsa deinde qualitas rerum talis deforis apparere curatur, ut non minus aspectus, quam gustus delectetur, et cum jam stomachus crebris ructibus repletum se indicet, necdum tamen curiositas satiatur." *Apologia*; SBO 3, p. 98; trans. Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance." Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Towards Art* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 104–105.

Abelard. But here too, the issue at stake is once more measure, or the lack if it: exuberance and pride:

> Master Abelard is a monk without a Rule, a prelate without care, neither keeps order nor is he being kept by order. The man is dissimilar to himself, inside a Herod, outside a Saint John, altogether ambiguous. In no respect does he resemble a monk except in name and habit. But what business is that of mine? "Everybody will carry his own burden"… He oversteps the boundaries set by the Fathers… There is nothing he does not know of all things in heaven and on earth except his own self.[36]

Gone is the rhetorical playfulness of the polemics against Cluny. Matters seem too serious for that. But are they? One implication of Bernard's "shifts and twists" was an extreme degree of freedom on the part of the author to move around, not only his own "I" but also the self of others, regardless of whether the discourse concerned Scripture or the life and times of contemporaries. As a result, when Bernard confronts Abelard on the issue of being "without measure," he embarks on a problem that, by necessity, also concerns himself. The confrontation between him and Abelard may have been no joking matter (and neither was, for all the amusing aspects of satire, the controversy between Bernard and Cluny). However, that does not mean that, from a rhetorical point of view, the satire about Cluny should be seen as squarely comical and the polemic against Abelard as dead serious. Like Abelard, Bernard was a *ioculator*, and just as Abelard's passionate play with logic and love songs is part and parcel of his "identity" as revealed in his writings, so Bernard's rhetorical playfulness—if only in the guise of hyperbole—cannot—or cannot without difficulty—be separated from a supposedly more serious content. If then Bernard accuses Abelard of being a monk without a rule, dissimilar from himself, a monk only in name and habit, it would be silly to label this as just invective playfulness. There is no doubt that Bernard, in his own view, had a case. But what are we to think of the fact that much of what is presented here as an accusation can be

[36] "Magister Abelardus, sine regula monachus, sine sollicitudine praelatus, nec ordinem tenet, nec tenetur ordine. Homo sibi dissimilis est, intus Herodes, foris Iohannes, totus ambiguus, nihil habens de monacho praeter nomen et habitum. Sed quis ad me? UNUSQUISQUE ONUS SUUM PORTABIT… Transgreditur terminos quos posuerunt Patres nostri… Homo est egrediens mensuram suam… Nihil nescit omnium quae in caelo et in terra sunt, praeter seipsum." Epistola 193; SBO 7, pp. 44–45.

found in Bernard's work as self-accusation? Of course, one cannot help but think of his famous lament in Letter 250:

> Time has come to think of myself. My monstrous life and my bad conscience cry it out to you. As far as I am concerned, I am the chimera of my age. Long since I have ceased to love the life of a monk; all I kept of it is its habit.[37]

As far as the "boundaries drawn by the Fathers" is concerned, the problem of "measure" comes once more to the fore. Are those "boundaries" as fixed as Bernard's hyperbolic language seems to suggest? Far from being fixed they are—certainly in the 12th century—being developed and coined in a process of reading, meditation, and interpretation. In fact, they are an intrinsic part of that process itself. As a result, we might speculate that what Bernard felt threatened by in Abelard's behaviour was a competitive skill of playfulness that was bound to undermine his own room for maneuvering in defending a "fixed" orthodoxy in terms of dogma and Church teaching. There is a sense in which the flexibility in applying the literary technique, when reading and meditating on Scripture, of "shifts and twists of subjects and grammatical case" required a playing field as spacious as the room needed by logicians such as Abelard to think freely and accurately. In either case "measure" is the problem.

Conclusion

Now a final word about our image of the public *persona* of the preacher Paul VI. Mohrmann's observation was triggered by a Bernardine text she and I happened to talk about. The text was a remarkable passage from the fourth sermon on the Resurrection in which all the dividing lines between events and persons, past and present, are blurred and the dead body turns out to be no other than the obstinate soul which is as dead as dead can be.[38] In that context the question of the women arriving at the grave becomes an urgent one: "Who will roll

[37] "Tempus est ut non obliviscar mei. Clamat ad vos mea monstruosa vita, mea aerumnosa conscientia. Ego enim quaedam Chimaera mei saeculi, nec clericum gero, nec laicum. Nam monachi iamdudum exui conservationem non habitum." Epistola 250; SBO 8, p. 147.

[38] I have discussed this passage in more detail in my *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought*, pp. 276–293.

back this stone from the opening of the monument?" What follows mirrors, as it were, the image of the ascended Jesus, his having gone and being unapproachable. The passage abounds with *figura*, and yet distinct features of historicity come and go until, ultimately, the entire passage itself rolls back, not into a person but into a stone with the angel sitting on it.

> Indeed, those spices of the hand are bought with the money of subjection. For subjection directs our steps and earns us the grace of conversion. For if a contrary law is found in our members through disobedience, who does not know that continence is the gift of obedience? It is she who knows how to set order in mercy, she who teaches and bestows patience. Approach then with those spices him in whom faith has died. Truly, if we much it means for us to wake up him who is in such a state and realize how difficult it is for us to come near his heart which is closed off through a certain stone-like obstinacy and impudence, then I think we too may say: "Who will roll back this stone from the opening of the monument?" And yet when we thus fear to come near in trepidation, hesitating before so great a miracle, it sometimes happens that the divine ear, loyal as always, hears the preparation of our heart and, on catching the sound of his strength, he who was dead rises. And, behold, the Angel of the Lord, with a joyful smile on his face, appears to us as at the opening of the monument. His is a kind of brightness as an indication of resurrection, suggesting his looks clearly to have changed. He offers us access to his heart, yea, he also invites us, rolling back the very stone of his obstinacy, and, sitting on it, so as to show us, after faith has been raised from the dead, the shrouds in which it had been wrapped. And as he reveals all the previous agitations of his heart he also confesses how he had buried himself within, and admitting to his own tepidity and negligence he says: "Come and see the place where the Lord was laid to rest."[39]

---

[39] "Porro haec manus aromata nummo subiectionis emuntur. Haec est enim quae dirigit gressus nostros et sanctae conversationis gratiam promeretur. Nam si contraria lex inventa est in membris nostris per inoboedientiam, quis nesciat per oboedientiam continentiam dari? Ipsa quoque est quae misericordiam ordinare novit, ipsa quae patientiam docet et donat. Cum his aromatibus accede ad eum, in quo fides mortua est. Verum si consideremus quam magnum sit ad nos suscitare eum qui eiusmodi est, quam difficile sit vel accedere ad cor eius, quod lapidea quaedam obstinatio et impudentia clausit, puto quod dicere habeamus et nos: QUIS REVOLVET NOBIS LAPIDEM AB OSTIO MONUMENTI? Attamen dum sic trepidi veremur accedere, cunctantes ad tam grande miraculum, fit nonnumquam ut solita pietate, praeparationem cordis nostri audiat auris divina, et ad vocem virtutis eius resurgat qui erat mortuus, Et ecce Angelus Domini, hilaritas quaedam in vultu illius, tamquam in ostio monumenti nobis apparet et fulgor quidam index resurrectionis, ut aperte videatur facies illius immutata, accessum praebens nobis ad cor suum, immo et advocans ipsumque obstinationis suae revolvens lapidem, et sedens super eum, ita ut suscitata

This passage can be seen as the epitome of Bernard's rhetorical and literary approach. Here the technique of "twisting and changing subjects" is stretched up to—and almost beyond—the limits of what can be seen and said. Yet, despite almost transcending the boundaries of orderly language, it all remains part and parcel of a literary and rhetorical technique. As such it keeps fitting in with the Robert of Basevorn's characterization.

Unlike the way in which Bernard usually sneaks into the biblical texts on which he is preaching and meditating, he does not highlight here the position of his own "I" as the dynamic principle of bringing the text to life. Improbable though it may seem, it is the angel himself who contains all the other persons and events surrounding the grave; or, more precisely, it is the stone he is sitting on. This is more than tropology, even more than mystical tropology. This is also more than a private reading or preaching made public, despite the abundance of individual devotion that may seem to be at the centre of this scene. What emerges from the text as from an empty grave and makes it as effective as the "public," literary embarrassment of Paul VI is the momentary focus on a motionless object, a *nature morte*, a stone to be rolled back in a movement which is not dissimilar to the gesture whereby Jesus took his leave while at the same time already being on his way back. The stone with the angel sitting on it just "being there" represents at once movement and rest, going and coming back, and as such it embraces both the living and the dead.

---

fide ipsa, etiam lineamenta, quibus obvoluta fuerat, ipse demonstret. Dumque omnia quae in corde suo prius actitabantur aperit, et confitetur quomodo seipsum sepelierat intus, ipsam tepiditatem et negligentiam suam prodens: VENITE, inquit, ET VIDETE LOCUM, UBI POSITUS ERAT DOMINUS." *In resurrectione sermo* 2.12; SBO 5, pp. 101–102.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX AND THE LANDSCAPE OF SALVATION

Mette B. Bruun

> Between Babylon and Jerusalem there is no peace, but continuing war. Each state has its king: Christ the Lord is the king of Jerusalem, and the Devil is the king of Babylon. The first king is pleased to rule in righteousness, the other in evil. And the King of Babylon, through the agency of his servants, the unclean spirits, constantly tries to lure those citizens of Jerusalem whom he can into becoming more and more slaves of wickedness and thus to draw them to Babylon.[1]

Thus does Bernard introduce his second parable, with a panorama of the unending battle between the powers of this world. Presumably aimed at the edification of the claustral population at its broadest,[2] the scenery is clear-cut and the epic robust. All evil is subsumed under the locale of Babylon, everything good under that of Jerusalem. Between the two places a battlefield is laid out, on which takes place a veritable

---

[1] "Inter Babylonem et Ierusalem nulla est pax, sed guerra continua. Habet unaquaeque civitas regem suum. Rex Ierusalem Christus Dominus est, rex Babylonis Diabolus. Et cum alterum in iustitia, alterum semper in malitia regnarere delectet, rex Babylonis quos potest de civibus Ierusalem per ministros suos, scilicet spiritus immundos, seducere, ut servire eos faciat iniquitati ad iniquitatem, in Babylonem trahit." *Parabola* [Par.] 2.1, in *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Winkler et al., 10 vols (Innsbruck, 1990–99), 4:818; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 2, p. 267. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone; *The Parables and the Sentences*, trans. Michael Casey (Kalamazoo, 2000), p. 32.

[2] A precise identification of the exact monastic context and audience of the parables has proved difficult; see Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France* (Oxford, 1979), esp. p. 97; Jean Leclercq, "Introduction: L'auteur et l'œuvre," in *Galand de Reigny: Parabolaire*, ed. and trans. C. Friedländer, J. Leclercq, and G. Raciti, Sources Chrétiennes, 378 (Paris, 1992), pp. 13–37 (18 and 32); Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 179; Peter Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Leben und Werk des berühmten Zisterziensers* (Darmstadt, 1998), p. 57. Waltraud Timmermann excludes the lay brothers from the parabolic audience on account of the Latin; see his *Studien zur allegorischen Bildlichkeit den Parabolae Bernhards von Clairvaux* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), p. 67, n. 15, Casey and Leclercq, however, argue that the parables may have had vernacular origin; see *The Parables and the Sentences*, trans. Casey, p. 12, and Leclercq, *Monks and Love*, p. 94.

psychomachia between two armies of personified virtues and vices. This battlefield is at once man himself, claimed by good and evil, and a framework within which man manoeuvres between different dispositions. The spatial layout gives corporeality to the doctrine, and the two cities give orientation to the narrative plot.

But the dichotomy between Babylon and Jerusalem is also elaborated along more sophisticated lines and in quite different kinds of text. An instance is Bernard's handling of the divergence between the dwelling-place of the bridegroom and that of the bride in the 33rd sermon on the Song of Songs, which revolves around Song 1:6.[3] The preacher oscillates between two places: on the one side, the bridegroom's *locus*, (*felix regio*), a "place of rest, of security, of exultation, of wonder, of overwhelming joy,"[4] on the other side, the *hic et nunc* of the bride; that is, of Bernard and his audience:

> But alas! unhappy me, far from it as I am, and saluting it from afar [cf. Heb. 11:14], the very memory of it causes me to weep with the affection expressed by those exiles: "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion" [Ps. 136:1]. Let me cry out both with the bride and with the Prophet: "Praise your God, O Zion! For he strengthened the bars of your gates; he blesses your sons within you" [Ps. 147:1–2]. Who would not be filled with vehement longing to be fed in that place, on account of its peace, on account of its richness, on account of its super-abundance? There one experiences neither fear nor distaste, nor any want. Paradise is a safe dwelling-place, the Word is sweet nourishment, eternity is wealth beyond calculation.[5]

---

[3] *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (New York and Oxford, 1989) (hereafter NRSV) (Song 1:7): "Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon"; Vulgate (Song 1:6): "indica mihi quem diligit anima mea ubi pascas ubi cubes in meridie."

[4] "(…) loco pascuae simul et pacis, sed quietis, sed securitatis, sed exsultationis, sed admirationis, sed stuporis." *Sermones in Cantica* [abbreviated henceforth as SC] 33.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:516; SBO 1, p. 234; *On the Song of Songs*, vol. 2, trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, 1976), p. 145.

[5] "Nam et me miserum, heu! longe agentem, et de longe salutantem, en ipsa eius recordatio ad lacrimas provocat, plane iuxta affectionem et vocem dicentium: Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus, dum recordaremur Sion [Ps. 136:1]. Libet exclamare et me cum sponsa pariter et cum Propheta: Lauda Deum tuum, Sion, quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum, benedixit filiis tuis in te [Ps. 147:1–2]. Quis non illic vehementer cupiat pasci, et propter pacem, et propter adipem, et propter satietatem? Nihil ibi formidatur, nihil fastiditur, nihil deficit. Tuta habitatio paradisus, dulce pabulum Verbum, opulentia multa nimis aeternitas." SC 33.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:516–18; SBO 1, pp. 234–235; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), pp. 145–146.

With this bi-polar topographical pinning, the abbot rehearses the contemplative distance of the bride from the bridegroom. But he also addresses the post-lapsarian exile of humankind and the distance of man from both Paradise and eternity. To the *felix regio* Bernard adds, by way of key biblical passages, the *loci* of Zion and Babylon, and he supplements them with further topographical indicators in *mansio* and *paradisus*. This is a mapping of the *loci* of salvation history in a few brush-strokes. But first and foremost it is a sketch of soteriological disruption, a portrayal of the exile's despair at the alienation from his *patria*, past and future, and his tentative, provisional alleviation of his plight by way of memory and longing respectively. Bernard lays down a topography and positions man in it. By his shifting of authorial perspective between the peaceful beatitude of the *topos* of the bridegroom, and the despondency of that of the bride, he points not only to the positions but also to the dynamics and tensions acting on man as he travels this topography; all in the course of one short passage.

The Bernardine *oeuvre* abounds in such topographical tableaux in which soteriology is hinged on locations. These are landscapes composed of a range of theologico-literary *topoi* cultivated in the Christian tradition by way of the biblical reception of the Fathers. Seemingly incompatible *topoi* rub shoulders, such as the Garden of Eden, Egypt, and Babylon, wildernesses and fortifications, *regio dissimilitudinis*, the crib of Jesus, the road to Emmaus, and the *cubiculum* of the king, to mention but a few. It is a landscape which constantly alters and is constantly viewed from different perspectives.

What is the role of these topographical sceneries and indications in the Bernardine texts? In his seminal work on the Cistercian's *théologie mystique*, Etienne Gilson structured his approach to Bernard's conception of the fall and salvation of man around notions with a topographical ring. The chapter on the terrestrial state is entitled *Regio dissimilitudinis*, while that on the monastery is called *Paradisus claustralis*. Gilson seems to evoke a spatial layout of soteriology as he assigns a specific locus to both terrestrial and monastic life. However, in *La théologie mystique*, the *regio dissimilitudinis* is not a place but a condition which signifies the disfigurement of man caused by cupidity.[6] Similarly, the paradisiacal quality of the cloistered Paradise is associated with dogma

[6] Etienne Gilson *La théologie mystique de Saint Bernard* (1934; repr. Paris, 1986), p. 57, n. 1.

rather than locality; "Paradise" means that man has a potential for participation in trinitarian charity.[7] The topographical terms sustain Gilson's systematic rendering of Bernard's theology, but the locations are, above all, organizational labels for the exposition of Bernardine doctrine on Fall and grace, sin, and love. Gilson describes "l'itinéraire de l'homme en quête de Dieu,"[8] but the topographical charge of the landscape in which this quest is staged remains highly stylised and seems to be of little consequence. This approach is paradigmatic. The topographical register of Bernard's texts calls for attention—but not for investigation. Elsewhere Gilson talks about the structure of *Sermones de diversis* [Div.] 42, with its five regions and five marketplaces, as a "sorte de topographie mystique";[9] Jean-Baptiste Auberger defines the same homiletic structure, cautiously, as a "'géographie mystique'—s'il nous est permis de nous exprimer ainsi" and ascribes this structure to a secretary or someone in the audience; as if it was somehow unworthy of a Bernardine origin.[10] The topographical vocabulary is readily dismissed as a mere pedagogical device, interchangeable with other analogical vocabularies. As Jean Leclercq says about the *topos* of Jerusalem:

> elle est même parfois appelée "la terre des vivants." Ce qui importe n'est pas le lieu où elle se trouve—les images humaines avec lesquelles on est réduit à en parler ne sont que des analogies—, c'est la vie qu'on y mène, c'est-à-dire la vie même de Dieu.[11]

Bernard McGinn too describes the topographical register as a pedagogical device—but one that enables Bernard to speak in overall and explicit terms about things which are ultimately individual and ineffable:

> Like so many other Christian mystics, Bernard frequently presents itineraries or descriptions of the soul's progress. These sketches are essentially pedagogical tools, road maps that the guide of souls gives to his charges to provide them some general sense of what lies ahead. They are not to be mistaken for descriptions of the actual journey itself, an

---

[7] Gilson, *La théologie mystique*, pp. 108–141.

[8] Gilson, *Saint Bernard: un itinéraire de retour à Dieu* (Paris, 1964), p. 45.

[9] Gilson, *Saint Bernard: un itinéraire*, p. 55. Along similar lines, Pierre Courcelle describes the "allégorèse topographique" of the sermon as a pedagogical vehicle; see his "Témoins nouveaux de la 'Région de Dissemblance,'" *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 118 (1960), 20–36 (22).

[10] Jean-Baptiste Auberger, *L'Unanimité cistercienne primitive: mythe ou réalité?* (Achel and Cîteaux, 1986), p. 304.

[11] Jean Leclercq, *L'Amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957), p. 58.

> experience unique to each soul and always conducted at the discretion of the Holy Spirit.[12]

The topographical markers are by and large considered as means of imposing order and form on something which is difficult to grasp. Different chords are struck in M.B. Pranger's discovery of an author who juggles structure and turmoil.

> On the one hand, we find images which divide and organize space: *cubiculum, caelum, scala, ascensio, descensio*. On the other, we find images which are being produced and sustained by those spatial categories at different stages and with different degrees of intensity and visibility: truth, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Father, monastic man, humility, pride. Through endless variations within the spatial setting those images are subject to change. Thus they grant visibility to the *loci* and create suspense without ever occupying a fixed place or having a fixed shape. That is why they function both as organising and disorganising principles.[13]

This chapter approaches the topographical register in the Bernardine *oeuvre* from an interrogative perspective which hovers between two antipodal positions.[14] The argument rests on the assumption that, at its most fundamental, the spiritual topography represents the route-map of salvation history from Paradise to the celestial Jerusalem, involving an array of *topoi*, mainly biblical, which line the way and amount to a veritable landscape.[15] Each of these *topoi* may be employed as a signifier of salvatory progression or lapsarian detention. They constitute the locales of Bernard's soteriological master-narrative. This is an argument which borrows, especially from Gilson and McGinn, the idea that the backbone of the Bernardine texts is the reiterated representation of the fundamental narrative of man's fall and restoration.

---

[12] Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, 2 (London, 1995), p. 183.

[13] M.B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden, 1994), p. 116.

[14] For a more elaborate exploration of the topographical register in Bernard, see my *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (Leiden, 2007).

[15] With the originally Platonic notion *regio dissimilitudinis* as a significant exception, cf. *Parables*, pp. 182–196; see also François Chatillon, "Regio Dissimilitudinis," in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyons, 1945), pp. 85–102; Gervais Dumeige, "Dissemblance," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 3 (Paris, 1957), 1330–1346; Pierre Courcelle, "Tradition néo-platonicienne et traditions chrétiennes de la 'région de dissemblance,'" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 32 (1957), 5–33; Édouard des Places, *Syngeneia: La parenté de l'homme avec Dieu d'Homère à la patristique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 83–85; Margaret Ferguson, "Saint Augustine's Region of Unlikeness: The Crossing of Exile and Language," *The Georgia Review* 29 (1975), 842–864.

At the same time, we shall consider the *topoi* of the soteriological landscape as devices by which Bernard shapes and transforms the point of view, the narrative flavour, and the *ductus* of his text and spiritual discourse, at once sustaining and breaking up the straightforward structure of the master-narrative in ways crystallized in the passage from Pranger. Detailed descriptions of fragrant horticultural beauty, sly deceivers at cross-roads, Babylonian confusion, and Jerusalemite bliss lend colour, élan, and, indeed, effect to the abbot's presentation. The reader is invited to contemplate the fertile abundance of cedars, olive trees, and palms in the bridegroom's garden (SC 23.4), the monks busy at the clearing of forested land (*Sententiae* [Sent] 3.71), and the Devil's alluring tents at the way-side; with their gold, silver, and ornamented clothing, their food, honeyed wine, and young girls dancing (Par. 6). These descriptions lend narrative shape and accessibility to complicated doctrinal substance-matter, and give form to the message. They thus bear some resemblance to the various clusters of degrees and stages which supply structure to the abbot's texts and aid their memorization; and it is worth noticing that in his conclusion as to how he envisages the usefulness of the 12 steps of pride in demonstrating the 12 steps of humility, Bernard translates the vertical image of the ladder with the horizontal image of the landscape; they both provide a structure on, and in, which man may move, whether by climbing or advancing (*De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae* [Gra.] 22.57). But at the same time, the landscape differs from the steps and degrees in that it offers ample space for getting lost and being detained between places of different hues and implications. It establishes a horizon within which may be depicted a wide and complex array of *topoi* and journeys: on the one hand, Babylons, Jerusalems, cities, fortresses, wildernesses; on the other hand, the purposeful quests, confused meanderings, restless progressions, and diabolical detentions that are acted out among them; the tents, gardens, and chambers where the traveller lingers, and the nourishment, guidance, and obstacles which he encounters along the way.

The topographical register entails a latent anthropological dimension. It offers a backdrop for an appreciation of man in his relation to the soteriological landscape as stranger and citizen, dweller and wayfarer. This is vital. Bernard's primary interest lies with the position of man *vis-à-vis* God rather than theology *per se*, and the human hovering between fall and bliss, lapse and restoration, may fruitfully be represented as a question of being at home, or not at home, in various

places, of approaching and shunning different locations, or of progressions, deviations, and deadlocks in the soteriological landscape. This inherent anthropological charge sets the topographical register apart from vocabularies pertaining to, for example, food or clothing, or other strands of imagery which permeate the Bernardine *oeuvre*. I suggest that this anthropological weight is one of the reasons why the topographical markers should probably be considered as pedagogical tools—but by no means be dismissed too readily as mere pedagogical tools.

By constantly moving his protagonists and his authorial focus within topographically drafted scenarios, Bernard can conjure up new vistas and play out infinite variations of the basic theme. Paradise may be in view in one text (Par. 8); but in others, terrestrial incarceration is all there is (*Sermo in Septuagesima* [Sept] 1.4; SC 50.8). Terrestrial carnality may appear to be overthrown in the monastic *paradisus claustralis* (Div. 42.4), indeed the monastery may be perceived as the forecourt of the celestial Jerusalem (Ep. 64). But in other texts the monastic walls are decried as a sadly inadequate protection from the assaults of carnal yearnings (*Sermo super psalmum Qui habitat* [QH] 3.5), or monks are represented as caught in the Babylonian captivity just like everyone else (Sept 1.4). Heaven may appear close in the momentary and anticipatory union of bride and bridegroom in the *cubiculum* (SC 23.15), yet unattainably distant as the bridegroom disappears (SC 74.1). Terrestrial carnality may be nuanced as thraldom in Egypt or captivity in Babylon, as exile, slavery, or incarceration.

In short, a reading focused on the topographical register is a reading which gravitates between master-narrative and variation, between constancy and diversification. This chapter sketches the ways in which Bernard presents salvation history as a journey in a landscape; a voyage which takes highly diverse forms, in a landscape of multifarious locations; observed from a point of view which constantly shifts and presented by means of a broad palette of shades.

Bernard as the cartographer who maps the landscape of salvation is closely associated with Bernard the native speaker of "biblique" identified by Pierre Dumontier.[16] The landscapes of the biblical narratives

[16] *Saint Bernard et la Bible* (Paris, 1953), p. 157. See also Gilbert Dahan, *L'Exégèse de la Bible en occident médiéval* (Paris, 1999), p. 23. On Bernard and the Bible, see further, for example, Christine Mohrmann, "Observations sur la langue et le style de Saint Bernard," SBO 2, pp. ix–xxxiii; Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard*

recur as a fundamental underpinning of the patristic and medieval expositions of salvation history. As in other matters, Bernard's undeniable mastery in handling this topographical resource lies not so much in originality of thought as in the rhetorical consciousness with which he manages the biblical and patristic legacy and the verve with which he adopts and refashions it. The soteriological landscape and the anthropology that goes with it are presented in different ways and in different texts. Tracing these registers, as we shall do here, albeit cursorily, means reading across texts, extracting passages from their contexts. This enables us to sketch aspects of the Bernardine topographies, but it must be borne in mind that each of these aspects has its primary meaning and function within specific textual plots and circumstances.

Topoi: Babylon, Jerusalem, And Egypt

The *topoi* that go into the landscapes of salvation can be divided into two groups. There are the open-ended locales, such as fortresses,[17] wildernesses,[18] and mountains.[19] These locales add to the topographical

---

et ses écrits, vol. 1 (Rome, 1962), pp. 175–351, and vol. 3 (Rome, 1969), pp. 13–266; Denis Farkasfalvy, "Use and Interpretation of St John's Prologue in the Writings of Saint Bernard," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 35 (1979), 205–226, and "The use of Paul by Saint Bernard as illustrated by Saint Bernard's interpretation of Philippians 3.13," in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 161–168; Dorette Sabersky, "The Compositional Structure of Bernard's eighty-fifth sermon on the Song of Songs," in *Goad and Nail*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo, 1985), pp. 86–108; Dagmar Heller, *Schriftauslegung und geistliche Erfahrung bei Bernhard von Clairvaux* (Würzburg, 1990); Jean Figuet, "La Bible de Bernard: Données et ouvertures," in *Bernard de Clairvaux: Histoire, mentalités, spiritualité*, ed. D. Bertrand and G. Lobrichon (Paris, 1992), pp. 237–269; Guy Lobrichon, "La Bible des maîtres du XIIe siècle," in *Bernard de Clairvaux: Histoire, mentalités, spiritualité*, ed. Bertrand and Lobrichon (as above), pp. 209–236.

[17] The allegorical exposition of architectural structures is a specific strand within the topographical register, see especially *In assumptione Mariae* 2 and 5 and the six sermons *In dedicatione ecclesiae*.

[18] The wilderness is a primary example of such allegorical polyvalence. It may have a positive charge, signifying the simplicity of pure innocence or chastity (Sent 2.11), or—as in the Cistercian foundation narratives—corroborate the asceticism and austerity of the monastic *milites Christi*. It may also be negatively framed, and often is in Bernard, as a place of vain singularity in opposition to the merits of cenobitic life (e.g., Ep. 115 and SC 33.10). For a presentation of the many forms of landscape that can qualify as "genuine" Cistercian wildernesses, see my "The Wilderness as *lieu de mémoire*: Literary Deserts of Cîteaux and La Trappe," in *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*, ed. M.B. Bruun and S. Glaser (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 21–42.

[19] *Sermo in ascensione domini* 4 is significant in its employment of alpine images in the exploration of the relation between heaven, earth, and hell.

tone and spatial potential; they have no fixed connotations but may be exploited allegorically in a number of ways. Then there are *topoi* of which the spiritual quality is stable; Paradise, Babylon, Egypt, and Jerusalem are such locales. We shall have a closer look, first, at the relation between Babylon and Jerusalem in order to study the ways in which Bernard presents and modifies this urban antithesis *par excellence*; and second, at the *topos* of Egypt as an illustration of a *topos* of another evil, parallel with Babylon, but different.

The opposition between Babylon and Jerusalem is established through the Old Testament accounts of the captivity of Jerusalem in Babylon; in chronicles (e.g., 2 Kings 24–25 and 2 Chr. 36),[20] prophecies (Jeremiah), and poetry (Ps. 137).[21] In the New Testament, the contrast reappears in the apocalyptic predictions of the fall of the whore of Babylon (Rev. 17–18) and the coming of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21). The biblical relation between Jerusalem and Babylon has implications of war, siege, captivity, lamentation, and judgement with an eschatological undertone; and these implications are exploited to the full in the interpretational history of their conflict. *De civitate Dei* marks a milestone in this history with its identification of Babylon and Jerusalem with the earthly and the celestial *civitas* respectively. According to Augustine, *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena* are intermingled in their terrestrial shape yet distinguished by their disposition, and they are fully differentiated only at the end of time.[22]

In Bernard, the contrast between Babylon and Jerusalem is not addressed in one specific text. It is frequently brought to mind, but in various ways and with various implications. As the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter show, Babylon and Jerusalem may be employed as signifiers of various kinds of contrasts and dichotomies. Between them the abbot's representations of the two cities are so different in nuance and content that it is impossible to distil from them one basic Bernardine conception of Babylon and Jerusalem. He may set the two cities apart in a way which echoes Augustine:

---

[20] 4 Rg. 24–25 and 2 Par. 36 in Vulgate.

[21] Most notably verses 1 (NRSV: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion"; Vulgate [Ps. 136:1]: "Super flumina Babylonis ibi sedimus et flevimus cum recordaremur Sion") and 4 (NRSV: "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"; Vulgate: "quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena").

[22] For example, *De civitate Dei* 1.35 and 14.1; see also Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A study into Augustine's 'City of God' and the sources of his doctrine of the two cities* (Leiden, 1991).

> Jerusalem means "vision of peace," while Babylon means "the disorder of sin." As many citizens as these cities have, all of them are dissimilar and deeply unlike one another. For the citizens of Jerusalem are Abel and every other just person, all of them predestined to life. The citizens of Babel are Ham and every other reprobate, all of them foreseen as destined to die.[23]

He may also repeat the Augustinian doubleness between peregrination and fulfilment; of the *civitas Domini* he says: "Though in part reigning in heaven and in part pilgrimaging on earth, it is still one city."[24] But he by and large abandons the Augustinian intermingling of the two cities; for example when he describes the monastery as a Jerusalem as in the comparison of SC 55.2. The abbot begins in general terms:

> For I think that in this passage [Zeph. 1:12] the prophet indicates by the name Jerusalem those who lead a religious life in this world, imitating as far as they can the ways of the heavenly Jerusalem by an upright and orderly life-style, and do not, like the citizens of Babylon, waste their life in a chaos of vices and the turmoil of crimes.[25]

As he continues, it becomes clear, however, that in this case the identity of the Jerusalemite population is less enigmatic than in Augustine. Bernard sees himself as monk and Jerusalemite. But he has no illusions as to the absence of sin from this city and its population:

> But I, a monk and a Jerusalemite, have sins that are definitely hidden, overshadowed by the name and habit of a monk; and consequently it is necessary to probe them with an exacting investigation, and bring them from darkness to light, as it were by the aid of lamps.[26]

---

[23] "Ierusalem interpretatur pacis visio, Babylonia peccati confusio. Quotquot sunt harum civitatum cives, contrarii sunt ad invicem et penitus dissidentes. Cives enim Ierusalem sunt Abel et omnes iusti, omnes ad vitam praedestinati. Cives Babyloniae Cham et omnes reprobi et omnes ad mortem praesciti." Sent 3.121, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 4:14; SBO 6.2, p. 229; trans. Francis Swietek, *The Parables and the Sentences* (Kalamazoo, 2000), p. 420; cf. *De civitate Dei* 14.28 and 15.2.

[24] "(…) quae utique una est in caelo et in terra, licet ex parte peregrinans et ex parte regnans." SC 53.6, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:212; SBO 2, p. 99; *The Song of Songs*, vol. 3, trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmonds (Kalamazoo, 1979), p. 63; cf. *De civitate Dei* 15.1.

[25] "Puto enim hoc loco Prophetam Ierusalem nomine designasse illos, qui in hoc saeculo vitam ducunt religiosam, mores supernae illius Ierusalem conversatione honesta et ordinata pro viribus imitantes, et non veluti hi qui de Babylone sunt, vitam in perturbatione vitiorum scelerumque confusione vastantes." SC 55.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:238; SBO 2, p. 112; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), p. 84.

[26] "Mea autem, qui videor monachus et Ierosolymita, peccata certe occulta sunt, nomine et habitu monachi adumbrata; et idcirco necesse erit subtili ea investigari dis-

The Jerusalemite character of the monastery may be stated without a reference to Babylon, as in the *locus classicus* of Letter 64, where Bernard asserts that the pilgrimage of Canon Philip has reached its goal—at Clairvaux. Or Babylon may be tacitly implied, as when Ps. 136 is called upon in the statement that the monks have ascended from the rivers of Babylon because they are not bound by any worldly care for wives and children (Div. 2.1).

However, Jerusalem is not coterminous with the monastery. The monks share the basic human alienation from God caused by their sheer corporeality, however checked by asceticism, and 2 Cor. 5:6 is recurrently brought to mind as a reflection of the basic post-lapsarian condition.[27] To Bernard, monks—for all their Jerusalemite hopes and affinities—share the Babylonian captivity. In Sept 1.3, the word *septuagesima*, seventieth, the 70 days of fast before Easter,[28] elicits a lamentation on this exile:

> Now, I tell you, dearly beloved, that I suffer in hearing that name, and my spirit stirs in me because it yearns for the homeland, in which there are neither numbers, nor measures, nor weight. For how long am I yet to receive all that is good for body and soul by number, measure, and weight?[29]

---

cussione, et quasi admotis lucernis de tenebris in lucem prodi." SC 55.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:238; SBO 2, p. 112; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), p. 84. The passage reminds us that it is the light shed on sinfulness and not the antithesis between Jerusalem and Babylon which is the primary theme of the text.

[27] NRSV: "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord."

[28] Ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 4:744, n. 63.

[29] "Iam vero dico vobis, carissimi, quia plurimum in hoc nomine compatior mihi ipsi et commovetur intra me spiritus meus, suspirans nimirum ad patriam illam, in qua nec numerus est, nec mensura, nec pondus. Quamdiu enim in pondere, et mensura, et numero universa corporis et animae bona recipio." Sept 1.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:428; SBO 4, p. 346. On a similar note, see the lamentation in SC 50.8, playing on Heb. 11:13, "(…) quousque odoramus et non gustamus, prospicientes patriam et non apprehendentes, suspirantes et de longe salutantes?" ("How long shall we smell and not taste, gazing toward the fatherland and not taking possession, sighing for it and saluting from afar?"), ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:180; SBO 2, p. 83; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), p. 37.

Satiation is not to be found till in Jerusalem, the city of the great king. Bernard proceeds with an elaboration of Jer. 25 and 29 on the return of the Israelites from Babylon after the captivity:

> But when do we go there? Undoubtedly at the end of this present *Septuagesima* which is the time of our captivity. Because we read that the captivity of the sons of Israel by the Babylonians came to an end after seventy years; when those had passed, they returned to their own when the temple had been restored and the city rebuilt. But when is our captivity to end, brothers, which has already been extended for so many years, in fact from the beginning of the world? When are we to be released from this slavery? When is Jerusalem, the holy city, to be restored?[30]

This is one of the instances in which Babylon denominates post-lapsarian existence as such and where Bernard claims that man, whether lay or monk, is severed from Jerusalem in any guise.

Bernard's exposition of the tension between Babylon and Jerusalem is equivocal. On the one hand, the differentiation between the two cities designates the inescapable post-lapsarian condition. Man is an exile in a Babylonian region, longing for the unattainable Jerusalemite homeland. Bernard describes this situation in sympathetic mode; he aims to awaken or strengthen his audience's recognition of their fundamental alienation, but equally to mitigate this plight with the hope of beatitude and with contemplative anticipation. On the other hand, the distinction between the two cities may also be applied to the basic, terrestrial choice between two co-ordinate possibilities of identification. In this dimension the urban contrast is evoked to remind us that man must constantly seek Jerusalem and shun Babylon. This version is described in a more aggressive mode, aimed at distinction, choice, and ascetic estrangement from carnality. But in both versions, the oscillating point of view and definition through contrasts is important to our understanding of the two cities in their Bernardine representation. One does not exist without the other.

Egypt is a second key villainous locale. This locus encompasses several implications which define it as evil on a par with Babylon—but

[30] "Sed quando venient ista? Profecto in fine praesentis Septuagesimae, quod est tempus captivitatis nostrae. Sic enim legimus quod captivi a Babyloniis filii Israel terminum acceperunt annorum septuaginta, quibus transactis redierunt in sua, cum instauratum est templum et civitas reaedificata. At vero captivitas nostra, fratres, quando finietur, quae tot annis, ab initio utique mundi, protenditur? Quando liberabimur a servitute ista? Quando restaurabitur Ierusalem, civitas sancta?" Sept 1.4, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:430–32; SBO 4, pp. 347–348.

evil in another way. Whereas Babylon is a place of exile, Egypt is a place of thraldom. This is deployed to great effect in Par. 4's representation of the bride who slaves with bricks and mud in Egypt, mirroring the opening of Exodus and expounded more elaborately in Div. 71, which re-narrates the story of Jacob/Israel, who turns towards Egypt in time of famine (Gen. 42) and eventually goes there with his household to be reunited with his son Joseph (Gen. 46), leading up to the depiction of the slavery of the Israelites at the beginning of Exodus. In Bernard's version:

> A famine drives Israel to go to Egypt: there, it immediately finds a new master and is turned from free to slave. Through habitation in his land, it is brought under Pharaoh's power. He orders that male [children] be killed and female spared. Israel is sorely afflicted through work with clay and bricks. Pharaoh provides the chaff for the workers, hunger drives them.[31]

In this sermon Bernard proceeds with an interpretation of the Exodus story through analogies: it is not the hunger for bread but the need for the Word of God which drives many people to Egypt. This Word of God is the light. He who lacks the light of God enters darkness which is Egypt: "This is covered by the darkness of ignorance and subjected to the dominion of Pharaoh, that is the Devil who is the prince of Egypt, that is darkness."[32]

A basic characteristic of Egypt is gleaned from the biblical account of Pharaoh, who releases the Israelites only to change his mind and detain them (Ex. 8:8–14:30). Egypt, and Pharaoh as its personification, represents an ever valid *topos* of horror: the return of an evil

---

[31] "Fames cogit Israel intrare Aegyptum; statim reperit ibi novum dominum, et de libero servus efficitur. Ex illius regionis inhabitatione redigitur sub potestate Pharaonis, qui masculos praecepit interfici, feminas reservari. Israel operibus luti et lateris duriter affligitur, Pharaoh paleas ministrat laborantibus, fames cogit." Div. 71.1, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 9:632; SBO 6.1, p. 306. For a comparison of Israel's journey to Egypt because of hunger and that of the prodigal son to a *regionem longinquam*, in which he adheres to one of the citizens (*uni civium* […] *adhaesisse*), i.e., one of the evil spirits, see Div. 8.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 9:44–46; SBO 6.1, pp. 112–113.

[32] "Involvitur enim tenebris ignorantiae et subiacet dominio Pharaonis, id est diaboli, qui princeps est Aegypti, hoc est tenebrarum (…)." Div. 71.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 9:632; SBO 6.1, p. 306. When the newborn Jesus is brought to Egypt in order that he may be saved from Herod's anger (Matt. 2:13–21), it is, according to Bernard, a kind of radicalisation of incarnation: a further immersion into terrestriality; he is then no longer recognisable as son of God or king of heaven ("nec Dei Filius agnosci poterat, nec rex caeli") Pasc. 1.11. See also *V Sermo in nativitate Domini* 3.9, according to which Christ leads Mary into Egypt and out again.

that was thought to have been destroyed once and for all. Egypt is a location from which it is difficult to break loose. There are two sides to this bond, both of them rooted in the Exodus narrative. The first is related to Pharaoh setting out after the released Israelites, which Bernard expounds as a sign of the devil's persistence. It appears for example in both Par. 1 and 2 where Pharaoh attacks the fugitive company as soon as they think themselves safe in the castles of Wisdom and Justice respectively. The second aspect is related to the complaints of the Israelites against Moses and Aaron in Ex. 16:2–3,[33] partly the rebellion against Moses, embodied in the *topos* of *murmur*, partly the Israelites' longing for the Egyptian fleshpots. In a monastic context, *murmur* is a key marker of disobedience and disharmony, and it plays a significant role in the Bernardine vocabulary. It is difficult to say whether the Exodus context is present every time the word features in the abbot's work,[34] but there is at least one example where it is. The biblical passage in point is Num. 16:11. The Levite Korah, along with 250 Israelites, accuses Moses of exalting himself above his people, and Moses retorts that Korah stands against the Lord and murmurs against Aaron. Eventually the Lord makes the ground open and swallow Korah along with his fellows Dathan and Abiron, and their families (Num. 16:23–35). Bernard evokes the incident in a letter addressed to the Cistercian abbots about Cistercian monks who want to join the crusade:

> I have learned from the report of many that certain brethren are grumbling against you, and that they have scorned our holy way of life and are trying to mix themselves in the turmoil of the world. How is their case different from Abiron and Dathan who, while grumbling against Moses, were swallowed up by the earth, except that they are buried by their earthly desires?[35]

---

[33] NRSV: "The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread.'"

[34] For example Ep. 1.2, Ep. 143.2, Div. 41.5, and SC 29.5; see also my "Wandering eyes, muttering, and frowns: Bernard of Clairvaux and the communicative implications of gesture," in *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication*, ed. Steven Vanderputten, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 21 (Turnhout, forthcoming).

[35] "Murmurationes quorumdam fratrum vestrorum contra vos multorum relatu novimus et ipsi ex parte audivimus quod, spreto conversationis sanctissimae proposito, tumultuanti saeculo se infligere contendunt. Quid est aliud quod Abiron et Dathan murmurantes contra Moysen absorpti sunt a terra, nisi mentes talium desi-

Here, Bernard interlaces the murmur of Num. 16:11 with that of Ex. 16:2. The murmur of Korah blends with the idea of returning in the heart to Egypt. This summarizes the latent danger of monastic relapse back into the world. The passing over the Red Sea is a representation of the monastic vocation; Egypt is a figure for the riches of the world which must be abandoned by means of penitence: "For we have read about the sons of Israel, that they returned to Egypt in their hearts. For returning in body was prevented by the Red Sea, closing behind their ankles."[36] A similar identification of Exodus and monastic profession is made in *Sermo in dedicatione ecclesiae* [Ded.] 1.2: "You see for yourselves, I believe, how many miracles we would find, if we were allowed to scrutinize in each single [monk] his exodus from Egypt, his way through the desert, that is the renunciation of the world, and his entry into the monastery and monastic life."[37]

In the Patristic and medieval reception of Exodus, the Pharaonic pursuit and the yearning of the Israelites are connected. Pharaoh is the Devil, who makes the "Israelites" turn to Egypt in their hearts; and he is constantly busy. In SC 39's interpretation of the chariots of Pharaoh of Song 1:8, the ruler is depicted as a mighty warlord in charge of an army of vices; in sum:

> (…) trusting in the prowess of these captains and their chariots, the invisible Pharaoh rushes to and fro, inspired by a tyrannical rage, as he directs his attacks with all the power he can muster against the entire family of God. Even in these very days he is persecuting the people of Israel as they escape from Egypt.[38]

---

deriis terrenorum esse defossas?" Ep. 544, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 3:1038; SBO 8, p. 511; trans. B.S. James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (1953; repr. 1998), pp. 468–469.

[36] "Legimus enim de filiis Israel, quia corde redierunt in Aegyptum. Nam corpore reverti, clausum post eorum talos Rubrum mare prohibebat." QH 3.5, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:526; SBO 4, p. 396. Also in *VI Sermo in die sancto pentecostes* [Pent.] 1.1, Bernard warns against losing faith while waiting for the Lord and returning to the Egypt of this world in heart or in body.

[37] "Ipsi, credo, videtis quanta iam possemus invenire miracula, si perscrutari singillatim liceret singulorum exitum de Aegypto, et deserti viam, id est abrenuntiationem saeculi, introitum monasterii, in monasterio conversationem." Ded. 1.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 8:812; SBO 5, p. 371.

[38] "In istorum itaque principum fortitudine curruumque suorum, invisibilis Pharaoh ubique discurrens, in omnem familiam Domini, quibus potest viribus, more tyrannico debacchatur, in his, etiam diebus his, exeuntem Israel de Aegypto insequitur." SC 39.9, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:60; SBO 2, p. 23; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), pp. 197–198.

The *topoi* are sustained through their key inhabitants, and connotations are exchanged between inhabitants and places.[39] According to Heller, when Bernard includes a biblical reference, the biblical context ceases to play a role.[40] It may, however, be argued that figures such as Pharaoh, Moses, David, and Nebuchadnezzar have been crystallized into almost iconic shapes, in which traces of their original story are present in reinterpreted versions.

Both Babylon and Egypt symbolize a state of sin. Waltraud Timmermann tells us that the two places share allegorical sense as representations of the *Zustand der Sünde* and the submission to the devil.[41] But there seem to be slight differences in nuance. Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar are symbols of confusion, in keeping with the etymology of Babel (Gen. 11:9), as well as of siege, captivity, and violence. Babylon is also a place of memory (Ps. 136), a place where the *peregrinus* remembers his homeland. Pharaoh and Egypt are symbols of suppression, slavery, and unrelenting pursuit. They are also tokens of the satiation of carnal needs, as in the Israelites' longing for the fleshpots of Egypt. It may finally be suggested that contrary to the strong memorial connotations of Babylon, Egypt is a place of oblivion, a place where "Israelites" of any configuration are in danger of forgetting their true homeland and becoming "Egyptians."

The *topoi* are reservoirs of symbolic resources which lend themselves pliably to different discourses. Babylon and Egypt are constants in terms of connotations of evil and alienation, but the characteristics with which these *topoi* are endowed, and the way in which Bernard portrays them, vary according to the context. Jerusalem, Babylon, and Egypt are but three locales in the composite soteriological landscape. They have their place between a wide and diverse array of places. These places may be positioned along horizontal or semi-horizontal axes which range across sceneries which resemble landscapes; or along vertical axes and represent sceneries in which are staged exchanges between heaven and earth. But basically, one dimension is never absent from the other.

---

[39] In parallel with the concordance between monsters and their locations in medieval literature, see Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape* (London, 1971), p. 73.

[40] Heller, *Schriftauslegung und geistliche Erfahrung* (note 16 above), p. 115. This view is also found in Henri Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale*, 2 vols (Paris, 1959), 2:586.

[41] Timmermann, *Studien zur allegorischen Bildlichkeit* (note 2 above), p. 155.

The Bernardine Peregrinus *and His Locales*[42]

These landscapes are travelled by the *peregrinus*, whose meanderings are followed closely by Bernard's authorial point of view. In a Christian context, the alienation of the *peregrinus* subsists in two variants, each of which reverberates in the abbot's work. The first alienation is from God; the *peregrinus* is exiled from his paradisiacal *patria*, a stranger in terrestrial carnality which is henceforth for him a place of peregrination (*locus peregrinationis*). Man ought not to feel at home in terrestriality, for it is the devil's natural habitat: "Great is the danger and heavy is the fight against the domestic enemy, even more so because we are strangers, and he is a citizen: he dwells in his own region, we are exiles and foreigners."[43] The status of *peregrinus* implies a link to the homeland from which man has been alienated—if only through negation. The distinction between estrangement and citizenship is vital, and man's relation to a soteriological place through either of the two is significant for the definition of his state.

The second alienation is an estrangement from the first. This applies to the attitude of those who respond to the world with distance and abstention. The ascetic *peregrinus* appears in Bernard's obituary of the saintly Humbert, with an allusion to 1 Pet. 2:11,[44] a favourite reference in the description of monastic alienation: "As stranger and pilgrim he went through this way and this life, paying attention as little as he could to the things of this world, because he knew that he was

---

[42] In classical Latin, a *peregrinus* (from "per-ager") is one who has gone through lands. *Peregrinatio* primarily designates the legal state of alienation, and a *peregrinus* is first and foremost a person from somewhere other than Rome. Even if he has dwelled in Rome for his whole life and is Latin-speaking, the *peregrinus* remains a foreigner without citizenship or citizen rights. Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1969), and David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London, 2000), p. 1. For scrutinies of the Christian idea of *peregrinatio* and its development, see Jean Leclercq, "Mönchtum und Peregrinatio im Frühmittelalter," *Römische Quartalschrift* 55 (1960), 212–255, and "Monachisme et pérégrination du IXe au XIIe siècle," *Studia Monastica* 3 (1961), 33–52; Gerhart Ladner, "Homo Viator: Medieval ideas on alienation and order," *Speculum* 42 (1967), 233–259; and Giles Constable, "Monachisme et pèlerinage au Moyen Âge," *Revue Historique* 523 (1977), 3–27.

[43] "Grande quidem periculum est, et gravis lucta adversus domesticum hostem, maxime cum nos advenae simus, et ille civis: ille suam inhabitet regionem, nos exsules simus et peregrini." *Sermo in Quadragesima* [Quad.] 5.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:482; SBO 4, p. 373.

[44] NRSV: "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul"; Vulgate: "carissimi obsecro tamquam advenas et peregrinos abstinere vos a carnalibus desideriis quae militant adversus animam."

not of this world."[45] Another seminal biblical text is the vocation of Abraham in Gen. 12:1: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."[46] In *In epiphania domini sermo* 2.2, this call is interwoven with that of Song 3:10–11, "Daughters of Jerusalem, come out. Look, O daughters of Zion, at King Solomon":[47]

> It is to you, daughters of Zion, that we speak, you secular souls, you feeble and voluptuous daughters, not sons, in whom there is nothing of strength, nothing of manly spirit: Come out, daughters of Zion. Come out of carnal inclination to the insight of the mind; from the bondage of carnal lust to the liberty of spiritual understanding. Come out of your land, your kinship, and your father's house and see King Solomon.[48]

This is a call for the carnal souls to wrench themselves from the dispositions of their post-lapsarian state; from their thraldom to sin and clouded insights. It is the sight of King Solomon, the newborn Christ, that should make them depart from their sinful condition. In this passage Bernard addresses a plural "you"; elsewhere, however, he advocates estrangement in a more inclusive manner:

> Let us thus, dearly beloved, beware of useless thoughts, so that the appearance of our souls remains noble and so that we forget what lies behind us, that is, our people and the house of our father and so that the King shall covet our beauty [cf. Ps. 44:11]. Let us leave our land, so that no thought captures us which is inclined towards carnal lust. Let us also leave our kinship that is thoughts of the curiosity which dwells in the corporeal senses and is certainly akin to carnal lust. Let us leave our father's house, so that we flee thoughts of pride and vanity. Also we

---

[45] "Sicut advena et peregrinus pertransiit viam et vitam istam, quantum minus potuit de mundi rebus accipiens, utpote sciens quia non erat de hoc mundo." Humb. 2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 8:954; SBO 5, p. 442.

[46] Vulgate: "egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui."

[47] Vulgate: "filias Hierusalem egredimini et videte filiae Sion regem Salomonem."

[48] "Vobis ergo dicimus, filiae Sion, animae saeculares, debiles, delicatae filiae, et non filii, in quibus nihil est fortitudinis, nihil virilis animi: EGREDIMINI, FILIAE SION. Egredimini de sensu carnis ad intellectum mentis, de servitute carnalis concupiscentiae ad libertatem spiritualis intelligentiae. Egredimini de terra vestra et de cognitione vestra et de domo patris vestri, ET VIDETE REGEM SALOMONEM (…)." *In epiphania domini sermo* 2.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:38–40; SBO 4, pp. 301–302. For an examination of the relation between the *topos* of leaving one's homeland and oblivion in Bernard, see Wim Verbaal, "Bernard of Clairvaux's School of Oblivion," in *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*, ed. Bruun and Glaser (note 18 above), pp. 221–237 (esp. pp. 228–232).

> were once, like everyone else, children of wrath [Eph. 2:3]; also we had the Devil as our father [cf. Jn. 8:44] (…).[49]

The carnality, curiosity, and lust which are to post-lapsarian man an environment so natural that it resembles home must be left behind—again and again. The call of God to Abraham to leave his fatherland and become a *peregrinus* is also the continual vocation of the monk.

The *peregrinus* is held in suspense between the homeland which is lost and which he must strive to regain and the alienation in which he is presently positioned. His relationship to each of these places is reflected in his choice of habitation. According to Augustine, Cain founded the first terrestrial city (Gen. 4.17) and thus laid the foundation for the *civitas terrena*: whereas Abel, who was a pilgrim and stranger on earth and belonged to the *civitas* of God, founded none.[50] The city is the epitome of earthly settlement, and dwelling in it betrays confirmation of a terrestrial citizenship where there should have been recognition of its transitory nature. Not the house of the citizen but the tent of the soldier is the habitation which is appropriate in terrestrial provisionality; not until beatitude is the Christian allowed domesticity.[51] In the exposition of the tents of Kedar (Song 1:4) in SC 26 are clustered a few of the central biblical *peregrinatio* passages, together with the theme of soldiering:

> For what is meant by tents but our bodies, in which we wander as pilgrims? [cf. 2 Cor. 5:6] "For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" [Heb. 13:14]. We even wage war in them, like soldiers in tents, like violent men taking the kingdom by force. In a word

---

[49] "Caveamus ergo, dilectissimi, cogitationes inutiles, ut animarum nostrarum facies decora permaneat, ut obliti quae retro sunt, id est populum nostrum et domum patris nostri, concupiscat Rex speciem nostram. Exeamus de terra nostra, ut non apprehendat nos cogitatio spectans ad voluptatem carnis. Exeamus et de cognatione nostra, id est a cogitationibus curiositatis, quae nimirum, cum in sensibus corporeis habitet, carnali utique cognata est voluptati. Exeamus etiam de domo patris nostri, ut fugiamus cogitationes superbiae et vanitatis. Eramus et nos aliquando, sicut et ceteri, filii irae; eramus et nos ex patre diabolo (…)." Div. 6.2, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 9:232; SBO 6.1, p. 106.

[50] *De civitate Dei* 15.1.

[51] Presumably such thoughts resonate in the famous opening of Bernard's Ep. 2 to Fulk, a lapsed regular canon: "Non miror si mireris, sed miror si non mireris, unde mihi ut ad te scribere vellem, civem rusticus, scholasticum monachus (…)" ("I do not wonder if you wonder, in fact I should wonder if you did not wonder, why I should want to write you, the rustic writing to the citizen of the town, the monk to the student"). Ep. 2.1, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 2:264; SBO 7, p. 12; trans. B.S. James (note 35 above), p. 10.

> "the life of man upon earth is a warfare" [Job 7:1], and as long as we do battle in this body "we are away from the Lord" [2 Cor. 5:6], away from the light (…) Our bodily dwelling-place therefore, is neither a citizen's residence nor one's native home, but rather a soldier's tent or traveller's hut.[52]

This passage merges the tents of Kedar from Song 1:4 with the tents of earthly habitation of 2 Cor. 5:1–6. The warfare-associations of the Song-reference converge with the progressive thrust of the Pauline letter. The passage points out both the "identities" that man must assume on earth: *peregrinus*, *miles*, and *viator*, and those that are to be shunned: *indigena* and *civis*.

Traditionally, the term *peregrinus* also refers to the traveller who journeys towards a holy goal. Unsurprisingly, this variant of *peregrinus* is less prevalent in Bernard, whose insistence on *stabilitas loci* is notorious. This does not mean, however, that travelling and wayfaring are absent from the abbot's work. The alienated *peregrinus* fuses with the *viator* bound for his heavenly homeland. The passive implications of *peregrinatio* as a state converge with the restless and purposeful proceedings related to the wayfarer's progression from virtue to virtue, from terrestriality towards saintliness, from the carnal towards the spiritual, with Christ as its point of orientation. This is a dire journey: "You have numbered my steps, O Lord [cf. Job 14:15], but I am a slow climber, a weary traveller, and I need a resting place."[53] But when Christ joins the wayfarer, it becomes bearable. Christ as *via* and *viaticum* is presented in the elaboration of Jn. 6:14: *Ego sum via et veritas et vita* at the opening of *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*. A narrative elaboration features in one of the Sermons on the Song:

---

[52] "Quid enim tabernacula, nisi nostra sunt corpora in quibus peregrinamur? NEC ENIM HABEMUS HIC MANENTEM CIVITATEM, SED FUTURAM INQUIRIMUS [Heb. 13:14]. Sed et militamus in eis, tamquam in tabernaculis, prorsus violenti ad regnum. Denique MILITIA EST VITA HOMINIS SUPER TERRAM [Job 7:1], et quamdiu militamus in hoc corpore, peregrinamur a Domino, id est a luce (…) Est ergo hoc habitaculum nostri corporis, non civis mansio aut indigenae domus, sed aut tabernaculum militantis aut stabulum viatoris." SC 26.1, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:388; SBO 1, p. 170; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), pp. 58–59.

[53] "Tu quidem, Domine, gressus meos dinumeras, sed ego lentus ascensor, fessus viator, diverticula quaero." *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae* 9.24, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 2:82; SBO 3, p. 35; *The Steps of Humility and Pride* and *On Loving God*, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, 5. Treatises II*, trans. M.A. Conway (Kalamazoo, 1974), p. 53.

> Sometimes, too, he joins up as a traveller with the bride and the maidens who accompany her on the road, and lightens the hardships of the journey for the whole company by his fascinating conversation, so that when he has parted from them they ask: "did not our heart burn within us as he talked to us on the road?" [Lk. 24:32]. A silver-tongued companion who, by the spell of his words and manners, persuades everyone, as if in as sweet-smelling cloud arising from the ointments, to follow him. Hence they say: "We will run after you in the odor of your ointments" [Song 1:3].[54]

The disciples on their way to Emmaus blend with the Song of Song's bride and her maidens, and the resurrected Christ accosting his distracted friends merges with the bridegroom who draws the bride towards him.

The *viator* is dedicated to his *via*; ideally the *via regia*. The notion of *via regia* emerges from a fusion of Num. 20:17 and Num. 21:22.[55] The royal way is the highway that goes straight through the country to the royal capital.[56] This meaning is reappropriated in the allegorical interpretation of *via regia* as the straight way to the celestial kingdom reigned over by Christ, merging with the point that it is the way that has been shown by Christ in an association of *via regia* with Jn. 14:6's declaration that Christ is the way.[57]

---

[54] "Nunc rursum quasi viator quispiam itinerantibus sponsae simul atque adolescentulis sese associans, iucundissimis confabulationibus suis a labore viae omnem relevat comitatum, ita ut eo discedente loquantur: NONNE COR NOSTRUM ARDENS ERAT IN NOBIS, DUM LOQUERETUR NOBIS IN VIA? [Lk. 24:32]. Facundus comes, qui in sermonum et morum suavitate suorum, tamquam in quadam fragranti suaveolentia spirantium unguentorum, post se currere faciat universos; unde et dicunt: IN ODORE UNGUENTORUM TUORUM CURREMUS [Song 1:3, not the Vulgate wording]." SC 31.7, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:496; SBO 1, p. 224; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 130. On Christ as the guide on the way, see Pur 1.2.

[55] Num. 20:17, NRSV: "Now let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from any well; we will go along the King's Highway, not turning aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory"; Vulgate: "obsecramus ut nobis transire liceat per terram tuam non ibimus per agros nec per vineas non bibemus aquas de puteis tuis sed gradiemur via publica nec ad dextram nec ad sinistram declinantes donec transeamus terminos tuos." The passage is reproduced almost verbatim in Num. 21:22, only there the way is designated "via regia" instead of "via publica."

[56] Jean Leclercq, "La voie royale," *Supplément de la vie spirituelle* 7 (1948), 338–352 (339).

[57] See also *Liber de gratia et libero arbitrio* 1.1. This merger seems to go back to Origen; see *Homiliae in numeros* 12.5–6. Cassian describes monastic asceticism as the royal way. In his description of ascetic mortification, he associates *via regia* with the *iugum Christi*, *Collationes* 24.24.

In Bernard, the two significant features of *via regia* are the royal quality which links it to Christ and the straightness implied in the biblical wording about turning neither left nor right:

> The just man (…) prefers the royal road which turns neither to the right nor to the left. Finally the Prophet confirms: "The path of the just is straight, the straight forward for walking." [Isa. 26:7] These are the ones who take a salutary short-cut and avoid the dangerous, fruitless roundabout way, choosing the shortened and shortening word, not desiring everything they see, but rather selling all they have and giving it to the poor.[58]

Because *via regia* is direct and goal-orientated, it connotes a traversability of the otherwise absolute demarcation between heaven and earth, between "heres" and "theres," which associates it with the short-cut character of the *verbum abbreviatum*[59] of the Word incarnate; a term which has spatial denotations but at the same time challenges notions of spatiality.[60] Bernard has a predilection for short-cuts, epitomized in the instantaneous traversal from earth to heaven made by the robber on the cross.[61]

There are, however, also more prolonged routes in Bernard. The "way of the Lord" assumes several different forms. It may be described as straight, beautiful, plentiful, and without obstacles (*viae Domini*

---

[58] "Iustus (…) ipse sibi regiam eligit viam, non declinans ad dexteram vel ad sinistram. Denique, attestante Propheta, SEMITA IUSTI RECTA EST, RECTUS CALLIS IUSTI AD AMBULANDUM [Isa. 26:7]. Hi sunt, qui salubri compendio cauti sunt molestum hunc et infructuosum vitare circuitum, verbum abbreviatum et abbrevians eligentes, non cupere quaecumque vident, sed vendere magis quae possident et dare pauperibus." *De diligendo Deo* [Dil.] 7.21, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 1:108–10; SBO 3, pp. 136–137; trans. Robert Walton, *The Steps of Humility and Pride* and *On Loving God* (note 53 above), p. 113. Walton's parenthesis.

[59] Related to the Vulgate's rendering of Rom. 9:28: "quia verbum breviatum faciet Dominus super terram."

[60] See especially the description of the one-day-old infant in the crib as an abbreviation of God's eternal and infinite Word in *Sermo in nativitate Domini* [Nat.] 1.1, three sermons later subverted in the statement that the feast of the Nativity is so great that the day is too short and the extent of the earth too narrow, Nat. 4.1.

[61] See, e.g., Ep. 8.2 and *Sermo in ramis palmarum* 1.2; on the theme of short-cuts in the latter, see my "Procession and Contemplation in Bernard of Clairvaux's first sermon for Palm Sunday," in *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification*, ed. N.H. Petersen, M.B. Bruun, J. Llewellyn, and E. Østrem (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 67–82 (78–80). Other examples of short-cuts are Abraham's fast run along the road of obedience in his readiness to sacrifice Isaac in Div. 41.2 and the short-cut of monastic profession in Div. 93.2.

viae rectae, viae pulchrae, viae plenae, viae planae)[62] but also as arduous (*ardua*), narrow (*arta*),[63] long (*longa*), and laborious (*laboriosa*).[64] Furthermore, the way may change character according to its different stages. Thus, in *Sermones de diversis* 1.3, the section of the way that is related to the humble obedience of King David is embellished with the flowers of humility, while the section related to persevering obedience is difficult to follow and full of thorny curves (*difficilis est via ista et gravis spinosis anfractibus*).[65]

Bernard's spurring the wayfarer to move ahead reaches a peak in his homiletic blending of the progression in virtues with the liturgical procession at the purification of Mary. In one of his sermons for that feast, the abbot plays on the contrast between the standstill at the liturgical stations in the cloister and the progress of the procession:

> If there is perhaps anyone who fails to advance in these [virtues] and to proceed from virtue to virtue he should know that in this way he is not in procession but at a station, even in regression. For in the way of life, lack of progression is regression while nothing remains in the same position. Our progression furthermore, as I recall having often said, consists in never believing that we have seized [our goal], but constantly striving for what lies ahead of us (…).[66]

Lack of progression is regression. There is a general tension in the Bernardine texts between the claims for linear progressions and purposeful proceedings, and the frequent hints and displays of meandering. SC 23, for example is launched with a passage which features six variants of *curro* (run, hasten) in five lines:

---

[62] Div. 21.1.

[63] According to Div. 1.3, a broad way is not a way because broadness pertains to plains rather than ways.

[64] Div. 33.8.

[65] Div. 41.9–10.

[66] "In quibus omnibus si quis forsitan proficere dissimulat, et proficisci de virtute in virtutem, noverit quisquis eiusmodi est, in statione, non in processione se esse, immo vero et in regressione, quoniam in via vitae non progredi regredi est, cum nihil adhuc in eodem statu permaneat. Porro profectus noster in eo consistit, ut saepius dixisse me memini, ut numquam arbitremur nos apprehendisse, sed semper extendamur in anteriora (…)." *Sermones in purification sanctae Mariae* 2.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 7:416; SBO 4, p. 340. The passage draws on Phil. 3:13, NRSV: "Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it [the goal] my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward towards what lies ahead"; Vulgate: "fratres ego me non arbitror conprehendisse unum autem quae quidem retro sunt obliviscens ad ea vero quae sunt in priora extendens me." See also Farkasfalvy, "The use of Paul by Saint Bernard" (note 16 above).

> "The King has brought me into his rooms" [Song 1:3]. This is where the fragrance comes from, this is the goal of our running. She had said that we must run, drawn by that fragrance, but did not specify our destination. So it is to these rooms that we run, drawn by the fragrance that issues from them. The bride's keen senses have been quick to detect it, so eager is she to experience it in all its fullness.[67]

In fact the sermon proceeds at a quite steady pace as it goes through the garden, storeroom, and chamber of the king as symbols of the historical, moral, and mystical sense; and the sermon exhibits a constant tension between the restless haste of the bride and the gradual and, of necessity, slow process of understanding the Scripture.

In their pursuit of the restless soul who is caught halfway between bliss and despair, Bernard's texts seldom take a straightforward course. And the more spiritually mature the reader, the more labyrinthine the text. The wayfarer is urged forward along the *via regia*, looking neither to the right nor to the left; meanwhile the *ductus* forks and proliferates. This is a conscious strategy, and sometimes Bernard emphasizes it himself. In SC 53, he expounds upon the mountains and hills over which the bridegroom leaps and bounds (*Ecce venit is saliens in montibus, transiliens colles*, Song 2:8): having directed his audience's attention to the differentiation between the part of *civitas Domini* which reigns in heaven and that which peregrinates on earth, the abbot resumes his interpretative course with the words: "To return to that from which we digressed a little—though necessarily I think—these then are the mountains and hills (…)."[68]

Even the standstill so deplored in the sermon for the purification of Mary is employed as a textual device. That same SC 53 ends on an explicitly stationary note: "The day is moving on," complains the preacher, "and we may not yet descend from these mountains" (*Sed inclinata est dies, nec adhuc omnino de his montibus descendere libet*).[69]

---

[67] "Introduxit me Rex in cellaria sua [Song 1:3]. Ecce unde odor, ecce quo curritur. Dixerat quia currendum, et in quo currendum; sed quo currendum esset non dixerat. Ergo ad cellaria curritur, et curritur in odore qui ex ipsis procedit, sponsa illum solita sua sagacitate praesentiente, et cupiente in ipsius plenitudinem introduci." SC 23.1, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:324; SBO 1, p. 138; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 25.

[68] "Hi ergo—ut ad id recurramus, unde aliquantum, sed, ut puto, necessarie digressum est—illi sunt montes atque colles (…)." SC 53.7, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:212; SBO 2, p. 90; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), p. 64.

[69] SC 53.8, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:216; SBO 2, p. 101; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), p. 66.

The context of the alleged homiletic *Sitz-im-Leben*[70] is here merged with the landscape evoked in the course of the sermon. If he were to investigate his topic even further,

> we must fear that the sermon will either lack becoming brevity or that a matter so excellent and promising will be deprived by hastiness of due consideration. If you agree, then, let us rest here today in these mountains, because it is good for us to be here, gathered by Christ together with the holy angels in a place of pasture, to be fed with richer and sweeter fare. (…) let us ruminate the repast from the Good Shepherd, what we have swallowed down so greedily in today's sermon (…).[71]

Here the *festinatio* with which bride and bridegroom elsewhere hasten towards each other (e.g., SC 51.3 as well as SC 57.6 and 10) is dismissed in order to give way to the ruminating pause.

The textual tortuousness, it may be argued, illustrates the convolutions of extra-paradisiacal life. Wayfaring along *via regia* may be the constant ambition, but deterrence remains the basic condition. This applies to the impious walking in circles but equally, albeit in other ways, to the monk in his suspension between heaven and earth. It is present in the polarity permeating SC 26, where Bernard is torn from his exposition of the tents of Kedar and the body as the terrestrial habitation of the *peregrinus*, ostensibly overpowered by the memory of his late brother Gerard. While rupturing the ongoing homiletic *exposé*, the digression on Gerard may be seen as an elaboration of the theme of citizenship and alienation that is the tenor of the sermon.[72] Towards the end of the sermon Bernard states the chronological point of departure:

> Last year when we were at Viterbo on the Church's business, Gerard became ill, so ill that it seemed God was about to call him to himself.

---

[70] As Verbaal reminds us, we should keep in mind the literary character of these texts and the literary function of their oral pretensions; Wim Verbaal, "Réalités quotidiennes et fiction littéraire dans les *Sermons sur le Cantique* de Bernard de Clairvaux," *Cîteaux* 51 (2000), 201–218.

[71] "(…) verendum ne aut sermo grata brevitate careat, aut larga excellensque materies debita diligentia festinatione fraudetur. Pausemus proinde hodie iam, si placet, in montibus istis, quoniam bonum est nos hic esse, ubi pastore Christo, una cum sanctis angelis in loco pascua collocati, et iucundius pascimur, et uberius. (…) Ruminemus ergo, tamquam munda animalia, boni Pastoris quae de hodierno sermone tota aviditate glutivimus (…)." SC 53.9, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 6:216; SBO 2, p. 101; trans. Walsh and Edmonds (note 24 above), pp. 66–67. See also SC 31.10.

[72] See further the analysis of this sermon in Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought* (note 13 above), pp. 163–206.

> I felt it unthinkable that my companion on my journeys, and so wonderful a companion, should be left behind in a foreign land.[73]

This may also be considered the topographical point of departure. While Gerard was not left behind in the foreign region of Viterbo, Bernard has now been left behind in the world, in a *terra aliena* without his fellow *peregrinus*. Gerard has passed on to the homeland (*transit ad patriam*, SC 26.11). The excursus on Gerard is anything but excursive. The passage reflects on the hardship and transitory nature of terrestrial peregrination which have been treated in the sermons preceding it, but also on the beauty of the bride that follows it in SC 27 with the prefatory words: "My brothers, our friend has gone back to his homeland, we have paid the full tribute of human affection to his memory, so I take up again the instruction which I then discontinued."[74]

Another bifurcation is found in SC 76. Here Bernard's homiletic presentation of the monks as guards of the Holy City is brought to a somewhat abrupt conclusion, by the call of his abbatial duties:

> I am summoned to attend to another matter, and one which is of lesser importance. I am torn in pieces, and I do not know which is harder to bear, to be dragged away from the one or pulled to the other. But I suppose it would be even worse to suffer both together. O the bondage of necessity! What I do is not what I choose, but what I detest. But take note where I have left off, so that we may take it up again quickly as soon as we are free to do so, in the name of the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ Our Lord, who is God above all, blessed for ever. Amen.[75]

"Evocamur in materiam alteram, et cui hanc cedere indignum"—the human condition in a nutshell. Being human under sin is all about summonses to attend to unworthy matters. This breaking off is a rhe-

---

[73] "Cum pro causa Ecclesiae anno praeterito Viterbii essemus, aegrotavit ille, et invalescente languore, cum iam proxima vocatio videretur, ego aegerrime ferens comitem peregrinationis, et illum comitem, in terra relinquere aliena (…)." SC 26.14, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:408; SBO 1, p. 180; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 73.

[74] "Quia debitis humanitatis officiis amicum revertentem in patriam prosecuti sumus, redeo, fratres, ad propositum aedificandi, quod intermiseram." SC 27.1, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:410; SBO 1, p. 181; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 74.

[75] "Evocamur in materiam alteram, et cui hanc cedere indignum. Angor undique, et quod aegrius feram ignoro, avelli ab ista an distendi in illa, nisi quod utrolibet simul utrumque molestius. O servitutem! O necessitatem! Non quod volo hoc ago, sed quod odi illud facio. Notate tamen ubi desinimus, ut quam cito in id redire liberum erit, inde mox ordiamur, in nomine sponsi Ecclesiae, Iesu Christi Domini nostri, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula. Amen." SC 76.10, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:536; SBO 2, p. 261; trans. Edmonds, p. 120.

torical device which sustains the oral tenor of the sermon while playing a significant part in its literary composition. Bemoaning the subjection to *necessitas* is significant in an author who claims the unaffected nature of freedom from necessity (*libertas a necessitate*) as an implication of man's natural state in the image and likeness of God.[76] The passage thus sustains the rupture between heaven and earth explored in the sermon.

Alongside its allegedly purposeful course, the portrayal of the fall and restoration of man as a journey in a landscape implies a potential for capturing and conveying those spiritual meanderings and deviations, stand-stills and regressions which bedevil what ought to be a restlessly progressive quest. There are the circles of the impious (Ps. 11:9), in which are caught those who, led by their *ratio* instead of their *amor Dei*, attempt to fulfil that longing for God, which is the natural consequence of the divine image in man, with something other than God: so that he who has a beautiful wife or a precious garment is constantly in search of someone even more beautiful or something even more precious, only to find himself still dissatisfied even if he achieves what he has been striving for (Dil. 7.18–19). The soul who circles so impiously is called *animus vagabundus*[77] and is guilty of the vice of wandering, *vagari*, which denotes purposeless and unfocused activities of various kinds; from the small-scale wandering of the eyes of the curious monk (Gra. 10.28), to the alleged wavering of Abbot Arnold of Morimond, who wanted to leave his monastery to live as a Cistercian in Jerusalem.[78] Such bodily wanderings are, largely, checked by the insistence on *stabilitas loci*:[79] the spiritual wanderings, a basic monastic vice, linked to *acedia*, are less easily curbed.[80]

The spectrum of themes which proliferate from the notions of *peregrinus* and *viator* adds to the formulation of the Bernardine anthropology in ways which are pinned to spatial and chronological indications. It offers a range of different *Anknüpfungspunkte*; marks aimed at the potential identification of the recipient with the text. In Bernard's descriptions of man as stranger and wayfarer in the

[76] *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 2.4–3.7.
[77] See also *Confessiones* 5.6.
[78] Ep. 359.
[79] *Regula Benedicti* 58.17; *De praecepto et dispensatione* 16.44.
[80] See for example the portrait of the spiritual *gyrovagi* in *Sententiae* 3.31, mirroring the vagrant *gyrovagi* reproached in *Regula Benedicti* 1.10; see also Michael Casey, "The Value of Stability," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 31 (1996), 278–301.

landscapes of salvation history, tensions are at work which chime in with the eschatological and spiritual contrasts of here-there, now-then, temporality-eternity, labour-rest, and longing-fulfilment. *Peregrinus* and *viator* populate the landscape, add a typological actualisation to biblical *topoi*, and personalize the quest from post-lapsarian terrestrial existence to celestial beatitude.

The Topographical Register Revisited

Bernard maps the soteriological landscape which ranges between Paradise—man's beginning—and the celestial Jerusalem—his goal—with the vast here-and-now of the terrestrial exile fixed between these two places. He adds biblical *topoi*, landscapes, and architectural structures to the picture, and positions man in the scenery as *peregrinus* and *viator*. By moving his authorial perspective within this scenario, directing his lens, as it were, at different objects and vistas within it, Bernard portrays the human quest towards beatitude in its composite character, complete with straightforward advances, carnal deviations, prompting brought about through the grace of Christ, and lapse brought about by diabolical allurement. He regards one *topos* from the position of another, shifts from positive to negative, from hope to despair, from restless labour to quiescence, and so creates a textual dynamic to match the dynamic of the spiritual experience of progression and detention. This is a representation in which the basic narrative about the Fall and restoration of man is told and retold in a range of different keys and colours.

But the topographical register is as evasive as it is apparent. Generally, the topographical notions do not appear as a consistent vocabulary in Bernard. They emerge amidst notions of food and taste, doctrinal gradations, and in contexts where topographical terms seem but a pretext for allegorical developments. Although topographical axes and themes may be construed from a reading across the *oeuvre*, we must keep in mind the fact that each of the occurrences of, say, Egypt has its specific role in its own textual context and partakes of the textual structure and thematic universe of that particular text. What is more, Bernard himself warns against any too rigorous reading of the topographical terminologies, intent in avoiding the spatial illusion, as it were, of the spiritual approach to God: "This approach is not a movement from

place to place but from brightness to brightness (…)."[81] Or, in another text: "You must not suppose this paradise of inner pleasure is some material place; you enter this garden not on foot, but by deeply-felt affections. You will be enchanted not by a copse of earthly trees, but by gracious and seemly beds of spiritual virtues."[82]

In other words, it seems that we are thrown back to the assumption generally harboured in Bernardine scholarship, that the topographical register is but a pedagogical device, a set of analogies aiming at explicating the inexplicable. However, the idea of pedagogical registers has its own specific position in the Bernardine universe, crystallized into the notion that man advances from an understanding *in carne* to an understanding *in spiritu*. Thus, according to Bernard, Incarnation itself is a pedagogical device of sorts. In the words of SC 6.3: "He became incarnate for the sake of carnal men, that he might induce them to relish the life of the Spirit."[83] The dynamic from carnal towards spiritual is a constant hermeneutical driving force; from the entry of Jesus into the womb of the virgin as an anticipation of his spiritual entry into the human heart (*Sermo in assumptione Mariae* 5), to the statement that what has been done visibly, in the dedication liturgy, to the walls of the church building is a tangible parallel to the workings of Christological grace in each human being (Ded. 1.4).

The topographical register is closely related to the "biblique" which permeates the Bernardine work and may, I suggest, fruitfully be viewed in the light of Geoffrey of Auxerre's hagiographical statement that Bernard "once confessed that when meditating or praying, the whole sacred Scripture appeared as if placed and explained beneath him."[84]

---

[81] "Nec locis sane accedendum, sed claritatibus (…)." SC 31.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:490; SBO 1, p. 221; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 126.

[82] "Nec vero locum reputes corporalem paradisum hunc voluptatis internae. Non pedibus in hunc hortum, sed affectibus introitur. Nec terrenarum tibi commendatur arborum copia, sed virtutum utique spiritualium iucunda decoraque plantatio." *Ad clericos de conversione* 13.25, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 4:206; SBO 4, p. 98; trans. M.-B. Saïd, *Sermons on Conversion* (Kalamazoo, 1981), p. 59.

[83] "Obtulit carnem sapientibus carnem, per quam discerent sapere et spiritum." SC 6.3, ed. Winkler (note 1 above), 5:102; SBO 1, p. 27; trans. Walsh (note 4 above), p. 33. See also SC 53.7 and Farkasfalvy, "Use and Interpretation of St John's Prologue" (note 16 above).

[84] "Nam et confessus est aliquando, sibi meditanti vel oranti sacram omnem, velut sub se positam et expositam, apparuisse Scripturam." *Vita Prima* 3.7, in Migne, PL:185:307.

A reading of the abbot's work specifically attuned to the various ways in which the topographical register emerges sheds light not so much on a coherent landscape as on the unique way in which Bernard administers the legacy of tradition, sketches comprehensive matter in concise ways yet allows for disruption and subversions, and states his own views firmly while leaving just enough room for his readers to appropriate his message in the light of their individual experiences through identification with *peregrini* and *viatores*. Any too rigorous attempt to pinpoint this register and its landscapes must be checked by Bernard's statement that the spatial concepts are not material and hence not spatial but spiritual. At the same time, any dismissal of such concepts as "merely" pedagogical must be reconsidered and re-orientated in the light of Bernard's ideas of the progression of human understanding from carnal to spiritual. The tableau of the diabolical Pharaoh in pursuit of the monastic Israelites on their way from the Egypt of the secular world into the desert of monastic life thus remains suspended between historicity and allegory, between form and substance, and between master-narrative and variation.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX AND CHRISTIAN ART

Diane J. Reilly

I will overlook the immense heights of the places of prayer, their immoderate lengths, their superfluous widths, the costly refinements, and painstaking representations which deflect the attention while they are in them of whose who pray and thus hinder their devotions…

…Eyes are fixed on relics covered with gold and purses are opened. The thoroughly beautiful image of some male or female saint is exhibited and that saint is believed to be the more holy the more highly coloured the image is. People rush to kiss it, they are invited to donate, and they admire the beautiful more than they venerate the sacred…

…But apart from this, in the cloisters, before the eyes of the brothers while they read—what is that ridiculous monstrosity doing, an amazing kind of deformed beauty and yet a beautiful deformity? What are the filthy apes doing there? The fierce lions? The monstrous centaurs? The creatures, part man and part beast? The striped tigers? The fighting soldiers? The hunters blowing horns? You may see many bodies under one head, and conversely many heads on one body. On one side the tail of a serpent is seen on a quadruped, on the other side the head of a quadruped is on the body of a fish. Over there an animal has a horse for the front half and a goat for the back; here a creature which is horned in front is equine behind. In short, everywhere so plentiful and astonishing a variety of contradictory forms is seen that one would rather read in the marble than in books, and spend the whole day wondering at every single one of them than in meditating on the law of God. Good God! If one is not ashamed of the absurdity, why is one not at least troubled at the expense?"[1]

---

[1] "Omitto oratoriorum immensas altitudines, immoderatas longitudines, supervacuas latitudines, sumptuosas depolitiones, curiosas depictiones, quae dum in se orantium retorquent aspectum, impediunt et affectum…

…Auro tectis reliquiis signantur oculi, et loculi aperiuntur. Ostenditur pulcherrima forma Sancti vel Sanctae alicuius, et eo creditur sanctior, quo coloratior. Currunt homines ad osculandum, invitantur ad donandum, et magis mirantur pulchra, quam venerantur sacra…

…Ceterum in claustris, coram legentibus fratribus, quid facit illa ridicula monstruositas, mira quaedam deformis formositas ac formosa deformitas? Quid ibi immundae simiae? Quid feri leones? Quid monstruosi centauri? Quid semihomines? Quod maculosae tigrides? Quid milites pugnantes? Quid venatores tubicinantes? Videas sub uno capite multa corpora, et rursus in uno corpore capita multa. Cernitur hinc in quadrupede cauda serpentis, illinc in pisce caput quadrupedis. Ibi bestia praefert equum,

With these words, among others, Bernard seems to both describe and condemn the lively and colourful artworks and the soaring stone churches that had become common in France and beyond in the century before he wrote this text, the *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem*, between 1124 and 1125.[2] Approximately 7300 words long, the *Apologia* opens with a lengthy defence of Bernard's decision to address the failings of the Cluniacs at all. It continues with a criticism of the Cluniacs' intemperance in matters of "food, drink, clothing, bedding, retinue, and the construction of buildings,"[3] divided into chapters on meals, drinking, abuse of the infirmary, excessive clothing, negligence in priestly duties, pomp in riding, and art patronage. It ends with a discussion of the claim that Cistercians accept monks from who have fled from other orders against Benedictine strictures.

Bernard's *Apologia* has long been interpreted as a bellwether of monastic and episcopal norms of art patronage contemporary with the Cistercian reform. It has also been believed to contain an implicit policy statement on art within the Cistercian movement, thought to proceed from Bernard's personal and profound distrust of the visual arts. In fact, while Bernard's apparent rejection of what he termed

---

capram trahens retro dimidiam; hic cornutum animal equum gestat posterius. Tam multa denique, tamque mira diversarum formarum apparet ubique varietas, ut magis legere libeat in marmoribus, quam in codicibus, totumque diem occupare singula ista mirando, quam in lege Dei meditando. Proh Deo! si non pudet ineptiarum, cur vel non piget expensarum?" *Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem* 12.28–29; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 3, p. 104, lines 12–16; 3, p. 105, lines 16–19; 3, p. 106, lines 14–25. Translation by Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance." Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 279, 281, 283.

[2] The *Apologia* is almost universally agreed to have been written in the wake of William of Saint Thierry's request around 1125 for a treatise on the excesses of the Cluniacs (and possibly referenced in Bernard's letter to William of that date) and described as finished in a letter to a canon named Oger, again around 1125. See *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Bruno Scott James, 2nd ed. (Gloucestershire, 1998), letters 87 (SBO 7, pp. 220–223, Epistola [Ep.] 85) and 91 (SBO 7, pp. 232–234, Ep. 88). On these letters, see Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance*, pp. 211–114. The dating has most recently been studied by Kathleen Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard: Text, Context and the Art Historical Interpretation of the *Apologia*" (diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 2004), pp. 17–39, who prefers a broader date range of 1121–26.

[3] Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), p. 261.

"excess"[4] in art and architecture is consistent with his critique of excess among monks in "all material pleasures,"[5] such as food, drink, clothing, and style of travel, it is also consistent with the policies and practices enacted by the early founders of the Cistercian Order. Bernard imbibed pre-existing Cistercian artistic values as part of his novitiate at Cîteaux, and these shaped both his rejection in the *Apologia* of art deemed useless in a monastic context and the types of art and architecture he would use and endorse throughout his career.[6]

We know little about the buildings, liturgical plate, and clothes Bernard encountered when he arrived at Cîteaux with his companions in 1113. The first buildings, and presumably those in which they still dwelled 15 years later, were simple and built of wood.[7] When Robert of Molesme, the original leader of the pioneer Cistercian monks, returned to his home abbey in 1099, he was ordered to leave behind at Cîteaux all "the church furnishings…and all the other objects he took with him when he left the church at Molesme," except for a breviary, which was to be returned after the remaining monks finished copying it.[8] We have no way of knowing whether these objects, which presumably included liturgical plate, were simple or luxurious.[9] The monastery's founders had clearly already founded a scriptorium, however, and they

[4] SBO 3, p. 107, line 8, "superfluitates," trans. Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), p. 285, and in his letter to William of Saint Thierry (SBO 7, p. 219, Ep. 84bis), outlining the proposed structure for the treatise as presumably suggested by William. See Charles H. Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art: the literary evidence," in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. Christopher Norton and David Park (Cambridge, 1986), p. 59.

[5] SBO 3, p. 105, lines 3 and 4, "cuncta…oblectamenta corporea," trans. Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), p. 281.

[6] This does not necessarily contradict the interpretation of Jean-Baptiste Auberger, who saw within the first decades of the Order the development of two rather different strands of Cistercianism: a more economically pragmatic style focused on strict adherence to the Rule of Saint Benedict, associated with Stephen Harding; and a more humble, spiritual brand tied to Bernard. Auberger, *L'unanimité cistercienne primitive: mythe ou réalité?* (Cîteaux, 1986), pp. 279–315, esp. 314–315.

[7] *Exordium parvum* [abbreviated henceforth as EP] 3, ed. and trans. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, Studia et documenta, 9 (Cîteaux, 1999), p. 421. See also Auberger, *L'unanimité cistercienne* (note 6 above), pp. 87–96.

[8] EP 7, ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 425.

[9] Although attempts to date the document remain vexed, the EP also records that early in the Order's history, liturgical plate made of precious metals and bejewelled were outlawed; EP 17, ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 438. Whether this was true of their earliest vessels, presumably imported from Molesme, is unknown.

soon established a house style in manuscript decoration inspired by the manuscripts they imported, by 11th and 12th-century English and Flemish styles familiar to many of them from their upbringing, and by the local Burgundian painting style. These manuscripts provide us with our only information about the aesthetic stance of the earliest Cistercians, those who had originally left Molesme in search of a life less lax, more austere,[10] and more in keeping with the original tenets of the Rule of Saint Benedict,[11] and who apparently believed that the possession and use of richly decorated manuscripts was not inconsistent with this desire.[12] The manuscripts also demonstrate a hallmark of later Cistercian artistic policy: while superfluous decoration meant solely to delight the eye or impress the observer was abhorrent, investment in manuscripts or buildings in the service of the Cistercian agenda was not. This is the very attitude towards art adopted by Bernard of Clairvaux.

Art in the Early Cistercian Milieu

The pioneering Cistercians quickly accumulated a library stocked with large, vibrantly decorated volumes, including a lectern Bible and patristic commentaries on the Bible by Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, Jerome, and Cassiodorus, in addition to a three-volume *Vitae sanctorum*.[13] All were more or less richly decorated with interlace and historiated initials, author portraits, and narrative scenes. The scriptorium adopted three different styles in relatively short order. Its artists first employed a style inspired by manuscripts imported from northern houses such as Saint-Vaast in Arras: knobby, beaded interlace which they used to craft multi-coloured initials to begin key passages.[14] This was replaced, even in the midst of their first major project, the

[10] As they were described in the Roman Privilege of Pope Paschal, presumably issued in 1100; EP 14, ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 433. See also William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England* (New York, 1968), pp. 347–351.

[11] EP, Preface and 3, ed. Waddell, (note 7 above), pp. 417 and 421.

[12] Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art" (note 4 above), pp. 56–58.

[13] On this practice among Cistercian houses generally, see Walter Cahn, "The Rule and the Book: Cistercian Book Illumination in Burgundy and Champagne," in *Monasticism and the Arts*, ed. Timothy G. Verdon (Syracuse, 1984), pp. 139–172. Also Auberger, *L'unanimité cistercienne* (note 6 above), p. 132.

[14] Yolanta Załuska, *L'enluminure et le scriptorium de Cîteaux au XIIe siècle* (Cîteaux, 1989), pp. 74–75.

lectern Bible, with a new style, usually termed the "First Style," based loosely on the English line-drawing tradition. The Cîteaux artists now composed colourful, line-drawn foliate initials peopled with beasts and hybrids fighting, flexible humans whose gymnastics accommodate them to letter shapes, and complex, often multi-scenic narratives.[15] Finally, within a few years a third style, called the "Second Style," was adopted by the artists, this time drawn from the monastery's immediate surroundings in Burgundy. Again using delicate colour washes, the artists painted grave-miened standing and enthroned figures, cloaked in flowing, Byzantine-style nested damp-folds.[16] Finally, some time later the scriptorium apparently converted to a non-figurative style of lush, foliate initials each painted in only one colour, termed the "Monochrome Style," though pages with multiple initials or hierarchies of text could display a variety of different colours in total.[17]

The timeframe for the production of the 23 surviving works (often divided into multiple volumes) with multi-coloured or figural decorations is, unfortunately, quite elastic, making it difficult to know just how many of these manuscripts Bernard might have encountered during his brief, two-year sojourn at Cîteaux.[18] Two of the earliest projects can be dated using colophons. The first volume of the lectern Bible is dated to 1109, at the beginning of the abbacy of Stephen Harding, Cîteaux's second permanent abbot, and thus is commonly known as the Stephen Harding Bible.[19] A three-volume *Moralia in Job*, painted in the so-called "First Style," ends with a more detailed colophon, which dated the manuscript to 1111 and, like the earlier colophon, mentions Abbot Stephen.[20] While scribes may have begun to copy the first volume of the Bible before Alberic, Stephen's predecessor, died in 1108, by the time they finished this project and moved on to the *Moralia in Job*, Stephen was firmly ensconced as leader of what at that time was still a single monastery following a newly invented form of

[15] Załuska, *L'enluminure*, pp. 75–85.
[16] Załuska, *L'enluminure*, pp. 113–134.
[17] Załuska, *L'enluminure*, pp. 149–163.
[18] As recounted in William of Saint Thierry's *vita*. *St Bernard of Clairvaux. The story of his Life as recorded in the Vita Prima Bernardi*…, trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (London, 1960), p. 36.
[19] Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 13, fol. 150v, *Anno M° centesimo nono ab Incarnatione D(omi)ni / liber iste finem sumpsit scribendi gubernante / Stephano II° abbate cenobium Cisterciense*. Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 69.
[20] Dijon, BM 170, fol. 92v. Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 69.

monastic observance, one that clearly embraced the production and use of very large and quite thoroughly decorated manuscripts, with gold details in many of the miniatures painted in both the "First" and "Second" styles.

Bernard and the Early Cîteaux Manuscripts

Thus by the time Bernard and his companions arrived at Cîteaux in 1113, the scriptorium could already be recognized as having founded its own school with a characteristic painting style. It is much harder to establish how long the "First Style" was used, when the "Second Style" first appeared, and when the scriptorium abandoned it in favour of the non-figurative, yet still decorative, "Monochrome" style. Yolanta Załuska dated the apex of the First Style's popularity to the second decade of the 12th century,[21] although in truth no *terminus ante quem* is provided in any of the surviving First Style manuscripts. Manuscripts in both of the home-grown styles share, in many cases, scribes and painters of minor initials, indicating that most likely less than a generation had passed before the advent of the new "Second" style, or that the two styles were even employed concurrently.

Attempts to date the second transition, to the Monochrome Style, have traditionally hinged on two assumptions: that the switch was driven by Bernard's rejection of figural imagery across the board, as expressed, according to some interpretations, in the *Apologia*, and that his objections to figural decoration were quickly embraced by the entire Cistercian Order and codified in the Order's *Instituta,* leading directly to a change in manuscript style.[22] It is also typically assumed Stephen's patronage was the primary motivation for the production of these illustrated manuscripts and that the impulse to create them was

[21] Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 81.

[22] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 175–204. The most important proponents of these conclusions were Charles Oursel, *La miniature du XIIe siècle à l'abbaye de Cîteaux d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Dijon* (Dijon, 1926), and idem, *Miniatures cisterciennes. À l'abbaye de Cîteaux au temps du second abbé saint Étienne Harding (1109–1134)* (Macon, 1960), pp. 16–21, Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), pp. 149–153, and Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), pp. 172–191.

stilled when he died in 1134 and was succeeded as abbot by a friend of Bernard's, Renard de Bar.[23]

It is obvious from the colophons in the Stephen Harding Bible and Cîteaux's *Moralia in Job* that at least those manuscripts, and most likely many others, furnished a library of lectern volumes when Bernard entered the monastery. Educated by canons at Châtillon and allegedly a keen reader of Scripture and biblical commentaries during his novitiate at Cîteaux,[24] given the monastery's limited library Bernard would have read from these manuscripts both alone, during the private *lectio divina*, and in public, during the nightly *lectio continua* in the Night Office, and in the refectory.[25] At the same time, the scale, vibrancy and luxuriousness of these early manuscripts have never dovetailed with the popular belief that Bernard of Clairvaux detested fantastic colourful figural imagery. Scholars have for the most part scorned the idea that Bernard would have viewed the images in these volumes with interest, rather than ignore them or dismiss them with disdain. William of Saint-Thierry, in his version of Bernard's *vita*, was the first to propose that Bernard had made himself, in effect, blind to his surroundings.

> His senses were so mortified that their reactions had ceased almost completely, so that when he ate, he did not taste the food that passed his lips. Indeed, after finishing his year in the novitiate, he still did not know whether the ceiling of the novices' scriptorium was vaulted or not. And although he used to make frequent visits to the church, he thought that the sanctuary had only one window, whereas there were really three.[26]

---

[23] Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), pp. 114–118, and more recently Adriaan H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Grand Rapids, 1996), p. 20.

[24] William of Saint Thierry, *Vita*, trans. Webb and Walker (note 18 above), pp. 42–43.

[25] For the monastic Office as it was observed at Cîteaux in Stephen's time, see Chrysogonus Waddell, *The Primitive Cistercian Breviary (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Lat. Oct. 402) with variants from the "Bernardine" Cistercian Breviary*, Spicilegium Friburgense, Texts Concerning the History of Christian Life, 44 (Fribourg, 2007), and idem, "The Early Cistercian Experience of the Liturgy," in *Rule and Life. An Interdisciplinary Symposium*, ed. Basil Pennington (Spencer, Mass., 1971), pp. 77–116. Also, P. Bruno Griesser, "Die 'Ecclesiastica Officia Cisterciensis Ordinis' des Cod. 1711 von Trient," *Analecta sacri ordinis cisterciensis* 12 (1956), 153–280.

[26] William of Saint Thierry, *Vita*, trans. Webb and Walker (note 18 above), p. 38. Migne PL 185:238: "Jam quippe annum integrum exegerat in cella Novitiorum, cum exiens inde ignoraret adhuc an haberet domus ipsa testudinem, quam solemus dicere caelaturam. Multo tempore frequentaverat intrans et exiens domum ecclesiae, cum in ejus capite, ubi tres erant, unam tantum fenestram esse arbitraretur."

Cultivation of inner spiritual life at the expense of outer experience is a standard topos of saintly vitae. Moreover, William of Saint-Thierry here apparently interpolated his own, later, experiences into the tale, for Cîteaux in the period of Bernard's novitiate had only wooden buildings, none of them vaulted, and thus there was nothing remarkable for Bernard to observe. Yet the impression that Bernard's preference for aesthetic austerity was both original to him and expressed almost immediately upon his arrival at Cîteaux has nonetheless shaped the interpretation of the monastery's early artistic trajectory and the dating and attribution of its artistic legislation.[27] Yolanta Załuska, in her survey of the 12th-century manuscripts of Cîteaux, suggested that Bernard's influence on the monastery's artistic policy began as early as his novitiate.[28] Several of the manuscripts produced concurrently with more famous "First Style" volumes, such as a copy of Augustine's commentary on the Gospel of John, and his *Enarrationes in psalmos*, display simple coloured initials that foreshadow those typical of the monochrome style.[29] Załuska states that they "constitute above all evidence of a first expression of Cistercian austerity and iconoclasm, an ideology which was only affirmed around the middle of the century."[30] But rather than assign the impetus for this style to the original Cîteaux artists or their patron, Stephen, she seems to cast the shadow of Bernard's *Apologia* back into his novitiate.

> A relationship of cause and effect remains to be established between these three manuscripts and the famous *Apologia* of Saint Bernard to William of Saint Thierry, a work which is dated 1124. Such a late date for our collection seems, however, unlikely, given the evidence furnished by the early manuscripts as a whole. Still one cannot refrain from thinking that Bernard was a novice at Cîteaux from 1113 probably until 1115, therefore at the same time when, very probably, the Master of the First

---

[27] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), p. 62, summarizes the numerous examples of this practice, most prominently C.R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800–1200* (New Haven, 1993), p. 35, and Otto Von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order* (New York, 1962), p. 43.

[28] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), p. 201, and Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 81.

[29] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Hamilton 55 n. 5bis, and Dijon, BM 145, 146, 147.

[30] Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 81: "…constituent de toute évidence une première expression de l'austérité et de l'iconoclasme cisterciens, idéologie qui ne s'affirmera que vers le milieu du siècle." Author's translation.

> Style completed his work, which Bernard would surely have known. It was therefore as early as this period, when a first discussion, as of yet vague, could have begun about what was appropriate for Cistercian manuscripts.[31]

Conrad Rudolph, building on the apparent divergence between the material artistic remains of Cîteaux during Bernard's novitiate and the attitude towards figurative imagery stated in the *Apologia*, has asserted that the *Apologia*, rather than fulfilling its stated purpose of correcting the errors of the Cluniacs, was instead intended as a critique of the practices and artistic priorities of Bernard's own mentors at Cîteaux.[32] Rudolph sees Bernard's putative description of distracting sculpture, the "filthy apes," the "fierce lions," the "monstrous centaurs," the "creatures, part man and part beast," the "striped tigers," the "fighting soldiers," the "hunters blowing horns," the creatures with "many bodies under one head, and conversely many heads on one body" as explicit descriptions of early Cistercian manuscript painting, and the *Apologia* as a veiled condemnation of Abbot Stephen.[33] According to Rudolph, the earliest Cîteaux manuscripts, such as the Stephen Harding Bible (Dijon, BM 12–15) and the *Moralia in Job* (Dijon, BM 168–70, 173), most resemble in their hybrid and "distracting" iconography the "Cluniac" sculpture supposedly described by Bernard. In addition, he asserts that the fact that this criticism was promulgated by Bernard, and that legislation exists from early in the history of the Order banning the most lavish liturgical plate and sculpture reveals that Bernard soon after his arrival took over legislative control of the Cistercian Order.[34]

---

[31] Załuska, *L'enluminure* (note 14 above), p. 81. "Il serait donc tenant d'établir une relation de cause à effet entre nos trois manuscrits et la fameuse *Apologie* de saint Bernard à Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, ouvrage que l'on date de 1124. Pourtant une datation aussi tardive de notre collection semble peu probable, compte tenu de l'évidence fournie par l'ensemble du fonds primitif. Mais on ne peut s'empêcher de penser que saint Bernard était novice à Cîteaux de 1113 probablement à 1115, donc au moment même où, très vraisemblablement, le Maître du Premier style achevait son oeuvre, que Bernard ne peut avoir ignorée. C'est donc dès cette époque qu'aurait pu s'engager une première discussion, encore confuse, sur ce qui convenait aux manuscrits des Cisterciens." Author's translation.

[32] Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), pp. 183–190, and idem, "The 'Principal Founders' and the Early Artistic Legislation at Cîteaux," in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture 3* (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 8–18.

[33] Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), pp. 125–157.

[34] Rudolph, *Things of Greater Importance* (note 1 above), p. 157, and idem, "The 'Principal Founders'" (note 32 above), pp. 9–14, 24, 27.

The question of who provided the impetus for the earliest Cistercian legislation has always been vexed. The origins of the foundation narratives and statutes of Cîteaux are famously complex, and in the past several decades their dating and authorship has been the subject of vigorous debate. The statutes at issue in this case are known as Chapters 25 and 26 of the *capitula*, or General Chapter decisions, attached to the *Exordium cistercii*.[35] The first of the two statutes bans silken altar clothes and vestments, multi-coloured chasubles except for the stola and maniple, and gold, silver, or jewelled liturgical plate, except for silver gilt chalice and fistula.[36] In the second statute, sculptures and paintings are banned from the churches and rooms of the monastery, with the exception of painted wooden crosses.[37] Whether one chooses to believe that they were written contemporary with the composition of Bernard's *Apologia*, as suggested by Adriaan Bredero,[38] or as early as 1119, as argued by Chrysogonus Waddell,[39] or even by 1109,[40] the legislation originated during Stephen's abbacy, does not address

[35] The relevant statutes are known by different numbers and use somewhat different wording depending on which version of the foundation documents one reads. Therefore, statute 25 attached to the *Exordium cistercii* [abbreviated henceforth as EC] corresponds nearly word for word to statute 10 attached to the EP, while statute 26 attached to the EC is an abbreviated form of statute 20 attached to the EP.

[36] Statute 10 attached to the EP reads: "Quid liceat vel non liceat nobis habere de auro, argento, gemmis et serico. Altarium linteamina, ministrorum indumenta, sine serico sint, praeter stolam et manipulum. Casula vero nonnisi unicolor habeatur. Omnia monasterii ornamenta, vasa, utensilia, sine auro et argento et gemmis, praeter calicem et fistulam quae quidem duo sola argentea et deaurata, sed aurea nequaquam habere permittimur"; ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 460. Statute 25 attached to the EC reads, "Quid liceat vel non liceat nobis habere de auro, argento, gemmis et serico. Altarium linteamina, ministrorum indumenta sine serico sint praeter stolam et manipulum. Casula vero nonnisi unicolor habeatur. Omnia monasterii ornamenta, vasa et utensilia sine auro, argento et gemmis, praeter calicem et fistulam. Quae quidem duo sola argentea et deaurata, sed aurea nequaquam habere permittimur"; ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 413.

[37] Statute 26 attached to the EC: "De sculpturis et picturis et cruce lignaea. Sculpturas nusquam, picturas tantumlicet habere in crucibus quae et ipsae nonnisi lignaeae habeantur"; ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 413. Statute 20 attached to the EP contains more detail and a rationalization: "De sculpturis et picturis et cruce lignea. Sculpturae vel picturae in ecclesiis nostris seu in officinis aliquibus monasterii ne fiant interdicimus, quia dum talibus intenditur, utilitas bonae meditationis vel disciplina religiosae gravitatis saepe negligitur. Cruces tamen pictas quae sunt lingeae habemus"; ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 464.

[38] Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 23 above), pp. 201–202, 215–216.

[39] Waddell (note 7 above), pp. 148–149.

[40] Christopher Holdsworth, "The Chronology and Character of early Cistercian legislation on art and architecture," in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (note 4 above), p. 52.

manuscripts, and is entirely consistent with what little we know of the ideology and production of art at Cîteaux from the beginning of the Order. If that was the case, then Bernard was defending pre-existing Cistercian tenets in the *Apologia*.[41]

Recently Kathleen Doyle has grappled with complexities of interpreting the *Apologia* and dating the Cîteaux manuscripts and has insightfully overturned some of the most speculative hypotheses. Doyle cogently refutes Rudolph's assertion that the *Apologia* records a split between the original founders of the Order and the generation that arrived with Bernard.[42] As Doyle points out, Bernard never mentioned manuscript decoration in his entire extant oeuvre, and unlike with sculpture, monumental painting, and metalwork, no legislation regulating manuscripts was promulgated until shortly before his death.[43] Not only do the specimens of Cîteaux manuscript illumination which Rudolph attempts to parallel with Bernard's descriptions not correspond particularly closely to the *Apologia*'s types[44] but also the descriptions of sculpture incorporated in the *Apologia* conform closely to antique rhetorical models of the sort employed by Bernard in other examples of his writing.

Doyle highlights the satirical literary style of the *Apologia* and the fact that it incorporates most of the standard parts of an oration: an *exordium*, a *divisio*, a *confirmatio* integrated with a *confutatio*, and a *conclusio*.[45] Most tellingly, in the body of the oration, in describing the alleged sculptures, Bernard uses the literary technique of a series of chiasmic comparisons. As Doyle explains, the creatures as described seem chosen for their antithetical value and for the fact that they form "contrasting pairs of images scattered randomly," using a loose style of

[41] This entire debate, including Constance Berman's provocative re-dating to the 1160s of the entire corpus (*The Cistercian Evolution. The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* [Philadelphia, 2000]), is astutely summarized in Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 40–62.

[42] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard, " (note 2 above), p. 62.

[43] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 202–204. The relevant statute is known in the most recent edited version as 82 of the *Instituta generalis capituli* attached to the EP: "Letters are to be made of one colour, and not depictive. Windows are to be made white, and without crosses and pictures" [Litterae unius coloris fiant, et non depictae. Vitreae albae fiant, et sine crucibus et picturis]; ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 491. See also Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art" (note 4 above), pp. 59–60.

[44] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 205–209.

[45] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 70–93.

rhyme.[46] Thus Bernard was most likely not intending to describe actual artworks, whether in stone or parchment, but instead following a literary model in order to make his oration as compelling and correct as possible. For this reason, scholars have never been able to successfully identify the sculptures he supposedly described.

Given that Bernard did not condemn the Cistercian manuscripts he had certainly seen and apparently did not identify any other identifiable artworks either, and that artistic legislation enacted during his early years in the Order also appears to have been wholly unrelated to the output of the scriptoria, neither the *Apologia* nor the artistic statutes can be used to date the Cîteaux manuscripts or to situate Bernard in a debate about them. What, then, was his attitude towards art and beauty in the world around him?

Art and Beauty in the Works of Saint Bernard

One consequence of the fact that Bernard's "description" and condemnation of excessive art in the *Apologia* is typically extracted from its context and taken as the central argument of the entire document is that the rest of his oeuvre is also interpreted through this lens, or ignored altogether for evidence of his appreciation of beauty. If one instead explores his letters, parables, commentaries, and treatises for hints of his attitude towards art, beauty, and excess, a fuller and more balanced picture emerges. Bernard was pragmatic about the uses of art and architecture, and he appreciated the beauty of material objects, including those created by artists. He deplored excess, particularly among his fellow religious, as he had expressed so forcefully in the *Apologia*, but condoned significant investment in objects and buildings when they served religious ends. His descriptions of art, architecture, and dress are also largely metaphorical rather than literal, leading one to doubt that he intended to prohibit specific genres or media. Nonetheless, one can find faint reflections of those very artworks to which he was exposed early in his monastic career.

[46] Bernard may have been inspired to use this literary figure by similar examples in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, or Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, 11.3. Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), p. 99. Bernard's chiastic writing style has also been noted by Ilene H. Forsyth, "Narrative at Moissac: Shapiro's Legacy," *Gesta* 41 (2002), 76.

One of the only explicit discussions of clerical art and architecture in Bernard's oeuvre outside the *Apologia* is found in the treatise, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, which Bernard addressed to Hugh of Payens around 1128. Not surprisingly, given its proximity in date to the *Apologia*, it uses many of the same terms in its largely metaphorical description of the Temple of Jerusalem, which Bernard had never seen.

> Truly all the magnificence of the first temple lay in perishable gold and silver, in polished stones and precious woods; whereas all the beauty and gracious charming adornment of its present counterpart is the religious fervor of its occupants and by their well-disciplined behavior. In the former, one could contemplate all sorts of beautiful colours, while in the latter one is able to venerate all sorts of virtues and good works. Indeed, holiness is the fitting ornament for God's house. One is able to delight there in splendid merits rather than in shining marble, and to be captivated by pure hearts rather than by gilded paneling.
>
> Of course the façade of this temple is adorned, but with weapons rather than with jewels, and in place of the ancient golden crowns, its walls are hung round about with shields. In place of candlesticks, censers and ewers, this house is well furnished with saddles, bits and lances.[47]

Bernard continued his treatise with descriptions of the "more striking aspects"[48] of religious sites in the Holy Land: Nazareth, The Mount of Olives and the Valley of Josaphat, the Jordan River, Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre, Bethpage and Bethany. As with the Temple of Jerusalem, Bernard had not visited any of these holy sites, so we should not be surprised that his descriptions focus on the allegorical meanings of their topography and their biblical symbolism. As in the *Apologia*, Bernard did not feel bound by the literal appearance of a locale in crafting his discussion, but instead was guided by its spiritual import.

At the same time, however, while vilifications of artwork or buildings almost never appear in Bernard's writing outside of the *Apologia*, he consistently criticized personal adornment. Condemnations of extravagant and gaudy apparel litter Bernard's writing. In his *Five Books on Consideration*, addressed to the former Cistercian monk Pope Eugene III upon his elevation in 1145, Bernard warned him to

---

[47] Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood* 5, in *Treatises 3: On Grace and Free Choice. In Praise of the New Knighthood* trans. Conrad Greenia, Cistercian Fathers Series, 19 (Kalamazoo, 1977), p. 142.

[48] Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Greenia (note 47 above), p. 149.

avoid the traditional trappings of the papacy and their metaphorical equivalents.[49] "It is hardly fitting for you to be found relaxing in luxury or wallowing in pomp. Your inheritance does not include any of these things,"[50] and "Destroy the pretense of this fleeting honor and the luster of this specious glory, so you can candidly consider yourself in your nakedness, for you came forth naked from your mother's womb. Were you born wearing this mitre? Were you born glittering with jewels or florid with silk, or crowned with feathers, or covered with precious metals?"[51] Similarly, "Let your fellow bishops learn from you not to have boys with luxuriously curled hair and foppish young men in their retinue. Surely, youths with curled hair do not belong among men who wear the mitre." But he explains this injunction in terms of appearances rather than self-denial. "Still, I do not urge austerity upon you, but gravity."[52] In his fourth homily, *In Praise of the Virgin Mother*, written very early in his monastic career, Bernard asks of worldly monks,

> And what do I say about their habit, which they choose more for its colour than its comfort, cultivating elegant cut in vesture more than virtue. I blush to say it, but fops with their dandy ways are outdone when monks start buying clothes for smartness. Heedless of any need, let alone religious sentiment, these soldiers of Christ want their habit to be an ornament rather than an armament.[53]

And yet, Bernard was typically pragmatic, even in his approach to lavish adornment. In his instruction to Duke Wladislaus of Bohemia and his court on their preparation for the Crusades, he advises:

> The army of the Lord is to set out next Easter, and it has been determined that a large part of it shall pass through Hungary. It has been laid down that no one shall wear any coloured, grey or silk apparel, and the

---

[49] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope*, trans. John D. Anderson and Elizabeth T. Kennan, Cistercian Fathers Series, 37 (Kalamazoo, 1976). SBO 3, pp. 393–493.

[50] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration* 2.10, trans. Anderson and Kennan (note 49 above), p. 57.

[51] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration* 2.18, trans. Anderson and Kennan (note 49 above), p. 70.

[52] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration* 4.21–22, trans. Anderson and Kennan (note 49 above), p. 135.

[53] Bernard of Clairvaux, Homily 4.10. Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne, *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. Marie-Bernard Saïd and Grace Perigo, intro. Chrysogonus Waddell, Cistercian Fathers Series, 18 (Kalamazoo, 1979), p. 56. SBO 4, pp. 13–58.

> use of gold or silver harness has been forbidden. But those who wish may wear gold or silver when they enter battle, so that the sun may shine upon them and scatter the forces of the enemy with terror.[54]

Originally Bernard's objections to lavish display appear to have extended to the monks' dwellings as well. William of Saint Thierry recounts Bernard's initial hesitation to build stone buildings at Clairvaux. When a new monastic complex was planned by one of the brothers, Bernard argued that "A house of stone is something that requires a great deal of money and labor, and if we were to put up any such, men might think ill of us."[55] Nonetheless, Bernard eventually stilled his doubts, and by the time of his death many stone buildings had been constructed at Clairvaux's daughter houses. Students of Cistercian architecture, therefore, have long sought to recognize Bernard's hand in the design of the 12th-century stone monastic buildings built not just at Clairvaux but far beyond its walls.[56] Of course, because the Cistercian structures built before Bernard's arrived in 1113 do not survive, it would be impossible to track a shift in style potentially inspired by his aesthetic philosophy. The early founders apparently already insisted that a certain number and arrangement of buildings be prepared even before a daughter house could be founded at a new site.[57] Bernard was similarly insistent that monks sent from Clairvaux not attempt to settle in completely unprepared wilderness. Moreover, Bernard oversaw the construction of monastic buildings at Clairvaux and its daughter houses, and he arranged for a consistent building plan to be transmitted to new houses as far away as Yorkshire, Flanders, and Germany, suggesting that William of Saint Thierry's tales of Bernard's indifference to vaults and windows notwithstanding, Bernard took a lively interest in the stunning structures built under his

[54] Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter 392, in James (note 2 above), p. 464 (SBO 8, pp. 434–437; Ep. 458). In these instructions Bernard seems to have mined his earlier censure of highly bedecked worldly knights (chapter 2, p. 132) and praise of the Knights Templar from *In Praise of the New Knighthood*: "When the battle is at hand, they arm themselves interiorly with faith and exteriorly with steel rather than decorate themselves with gold"; *In Praise of the New Knighthood* 4, trans. Greenia (note 47 above), p. 139.

[55] William of Saint Thierry, *Vita*, ed. Webb and Walker (note 18 above), p. 87.

[56] See especially Georges Duby, *Saint Bernard: L'art cistercien* (Paris, 1979).

[57] Capitula 9 attached to the EC: Of the building of abbeys, probably redacted *c.*1136 or 1137, ed. Waddell (note 7 above), p. 408.

leadership.[58] Enough consistency has been discerned in the planning of 12th-century Cistercian abbeys in the Clairvaux filiation that scholars have even come to refer to their layout as the "Bernardine plan."[59] Yet aside from the *Apologia*'s remarks allegedly addressed to non-Cistercian buildings and their decorations, nowhere does Bernard detail an appropriately Cistercian architectural aesthetic. That he approved in principle of lasting, well-built stone structures for his monks does not prove that he outlined a visual aesthetic for their exteriors or interiors. Likewise, just because the surface detailing of the beautifully simple buildings that survive, such as Clairvaux's daughter-house Fontenay, seems antithetical to the exuberant sculpture allegedly described in the *Apologia* does not mean that it was dictated by Bernard.[60]

Bernard's approbation of an investment in stone church buildings is echoed in his retelling of an incident from the life of Saint Malachy the Irishman. As Bernard recounts: "Malachy thought that a stone oratory should be built at Bangor similar to those which he had seen built at other places…" A local noble disapproved, however, proclaiming "My good man, what are you thinking of in bringing such a novelty to our area? We are Irishmen, not Frenchmen. What kind of silliness is this? What need was there for a work so extravagant, so haughty?"[61] Yet as Bernard reports, Malachy's plan had heavenly sanction:

> Returning from a journey one day as he approached the place he looked at it from some distance away. And behold a great oratory appeared built of stone and extremely beautiful… The completed oratory was so like the one he had seen that anyone would believe that he, with Moses,

[58] Glyn Coppack, "'According to the Form of the Order': The Earliest Cistercian Buildings in England and their Context," in *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*, ed. Terryl Kinder (Turnhout, 2004), p. 37.

[59] First proposed by Karl Heinz Esser, "Les fouilles à Himmerod et le plan bernardin," *Mélanges saint Bernard, Congrès de l'Association bourguignonne des sociétés savantes*, 24 (Dijon, 1953), pp. 311–315. See the doubts expressed, however, by Terryl N. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation* (Kalamazoo, 2002), p. 169.

[60] Christopher Brooke, "St Bernard, the patrons and monastic planning," in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (see note 4, above), p. 23.

[61] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy, the Irishman*, trans. Robert T. Meyer, Cistercian Fathers Series, 10 (Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 77–78. There is no reason to suspect, as Meyer suggests (n. 169), that this tale incorporates a veiled criticism of Bernard's own people, given that he himself commissioned many such structures and he patently approved of Malachy's quest to build a similar stone oratory.

> had heard it said: "See that you make all thinks according to the pattern which was shown you on the mount" [Heb. 8:5].[62]

The most famous example of Bernard's condemnation of unnecessary grandeur can be found in his letter to Suger, abbot of Saint-Denis.[63] Written around 1127, not long after the *Apologia* had first been circulated, Bernard's letter praises Suger for reforming the abbey of Saint-Denis and its monks and mentions a few of the grave faults Suger had rectified, some of which overlapped with the failings and excesses ascribed to the Cluniacs.

> As for myself, the whole and only thing that upset me was the pomp and splendour with which you traveled. This seemed to me to savour of arrogance. If you had been content to put off your haughtiness and put away your splendid attire, the resentment of everyone would easily have died down.[64]

Despite the fact that Suger is now considered one of the 12th-century's best known art patrons, and as a vigorous apologist for his patronage, Bernard makes no reference to this. Rather than condemn the abbey's structure, Bernard instead deplored the opening of its spaces to secular pursuits. He reports, however, "Now the vaults of the great abbey that once resounded to the hubbub of secular business echo only to spiritual canticles," an interesting observation given that Saint-Denis' oratory in this period was still the low, wooden-roofed structure built by Pepin, Charlemagne's father, in the 8th century.[65] The renowned vaults

---

[62] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy*, trans. Meyer (note 61 above), p. 80.

[63] Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter 80, in James (note 2 above) (SBO 7, pp. 201–210, Ep. 78).

[64] Bernard of Clairvaux, Letter 80.3, in James (note 2 above), p. 112. Similarly, Bernard assailed the dress and appurtenances of wealthy bishops in *On the Conduct and Office of Bishops* 2.4, "On Glorying in One's Apparel." Written to Henry, archbishop of Sens, just one or two years after the *Apologia* and around the same time as his letter to Suger, it tellingly begins, "One may observe in some prelates a positive cult of clothing but no, or next to no, cult of the virtues." Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Conduct and Office of Bishops*, in *On Baptism and the Office of Bishops, on the Conduct and Office of Bishops, on Baptism and Other Questions: Two Letter-Treatises*, trans. Pauline Matarasso, intro. Martha G. Newman and Emero Stiegman, Cistercian Fathers Series, 67 (Kalamazoo, 2004), pp. 42–47 (SBO 7, pp. 100–131; Ep. 42).

[65] Sumner McKnight Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis from its Beginnings to the Death of Suger, 475–1151* (New Haven, 1987), p. 83, based in part on a description by Abbot Suger, *De consecratione* 3, in *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis and its Art Treasures*, ed. and trans. Erwin Panofsky, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1979), pp. 95–97.

commissioned by Suger would not be begun for another 15 years, and Suger's campaign to outfit his abbey with stained glass, sculpture, and bejewelled vessels, crosses, and candlesticks began only after he had received Bernard's letter.[66] Moreover, Bernard appears never to have addressed this facet of Suger's abbacy, although both men lived another two decades and Suger's projects were well known. Thus any attempt to interpret Bernard's *Apologia* as a response to Suger's reputation for lavish art and architectural patronage must remain speculative.[67]

Bernardine Art Patronage and Ownership

In fact, in both Bernard's writing and in his own art patronage one finds evidence that he had developed an appreciation for the arts that surrounded him and sought to replicate those of which he approved in his own environment. Conrad of Eberbach recounts a tale in the *Exordium magnum*, one of the central documents of the Cistercian Order, which helps us to appreciate Bernard's assimilation of the beautiful objects that would have surrounded him from the time he arrived at Cîteaux. According to the author, Bernard was in the choir at Clairvaux during the Night Office, observing his monks. He experienced a vision in which angels went from one monk to another and visibly recorded their words in different kinds of ink depending on the care and attention they gave to the words. Thus the singing of some monks was recorded in gold, others in silver. The angels recorded the words of those who were sleepy and inattentive in simple ink, while the words of those who took no care they recorded in water.[68] Although the *Exordium magnum* post-dates Bernard, the story of his vision nonetheless records a revivifying of the text into the very form in which Bernard had first encountered it in the choir at Cîteaux and which was still the

[66] Abbot Suger, *De administratione* 30–34a, in Panofsky (note 65 above), pp. 53–81, Madeline Caviness, "Suger's Glass at Saint-Denis: The State of Research," pp. 257–272, and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, "Suger's Liturgical Vessels," pp. 282–293, both in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium*, ed. Paula Lieber Gerson (New York, 1986).

[67] As in James (note 2 above), p. 110, introduction to Letter 80 and contra Conrad Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St-Denis. Abbot Suger's Program and the Early Twelfth-Century Controversy over Art* (Princeton, 1990), p. 15.

[68] Brian Patrick McGuire, *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 1991), p. 28. *Exordium magnum cisterciense, sive, narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis [CCCM] (Turnhout, 1994). 88:75.

norm at Clairvaux under Bernard: large manuscripts with hierarchies of scripts in a variety of colours, including gold.[69]

The best example of a manuscript made for and used by Bernard in the choir is the Clairvaux Bible, Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 27, originally a six-volume lectern Bible, of which five volumes survive.[70] It is 49 centimetres tall and ornamented throughout with large and elaborate display scripts, including many painted initials of more than one shade as much as half a page tall. While these decorations lack gold and silver, no one could deny the time and expense lavished on them. The manuscript is annotated throughout for choir reading and written in a very large, clear script. It also has running titles at the top of most pages. This type of apparatus, along with the large initials and display scripts, aided the monks in finding the proper reading in the darkness of the oratory during the Night Office. Bernard may also have owned Troyes, BM 458, a somewhat smaller Bible also lavishly illuminated with miniatures, historiated initials and display scripts, including extensive use of gold. This manuscript may have been given to the monastery by Prince Henry, son of Louis VI, when he entered the novitiate in 1145.[71] Like Troyes, BM 27, it has been annotated for Night Office reading in the choir, including the punctuation characteristic of Cistercian houses, and thus obviously it was employed by the Clairvaux monks, not rejected because of its elaborate decoration.[72]

Indeed, as at Cîteaux, it is nearly impossible to credit Bernard's influence with the development of a specifically Cistercian mode of manuscript painting. As Walter Cahn has demonstrated, in the wake of the distribution of Bernard's *Apologia* and after the promulgation of the institute intended to regulate lavish manuscript decoration and stained glass, Cistercian manuscripts continued to display a wide

---

[69] See especially Cahn, "The Rule and the Book" (note 13 above), pp. 155–162, and Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 219–227.

[70] Walter Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts: The Twelfth Century*, 2 vols (London, 1996), 2:7–88.

[71] Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, 2:89–90.

[72] Other examples of illustrated and punctuated manuscripts made at Clairvaux during Bernard's abbacy include the many volumes of Augustine's *Opuscula*, Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 31, 40:4–5, 7, and 8; 43:1; 76:1–2, 115, 441, and 646. On this project, see Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 219–224. On Cistercian punctuation, see most recently Nigel Palmer, "Simul cantemus, simul pausemus: Zur mittelalterlichen Zisterzienserinterpunktion," in *Lesevorgänge. Prozesse des Erkennens in mittelalterlichen Texten, Bildern und Handschriften*, ed. Martina Backes, Eckart Conrad Lutz, and Stefan Matter (Zurich, 2010), 113–131; 715–728. For example, in Troyes, BM 458, vol. 1, fols 154 or 172, where one can see the Cistercian *punctus flexus*.

variety of decorative styles and the same luxuriousness of embellishment that had characterized the first manuscripts of Cîteaux, although gold and figural illustrations were abandoned, at least for a time, in manuscripts made in house.[73]

Echoes of Bernard's Early Experience of Art

Furthermore, although the artistic legislation eventually promulgated by the General Chapter expressly prohibited "pictorial representation in initials,"[74] Bernard's writing provides tangential evidence that he absorbed many scriptural lessons through the artwork he encountered during his two-year sojourn at Cîteaux, and perhaps during later visits, such as when he returned annually for the General Chapter. It must be stated from the outset that Bernard often expressed distrust of the bodily senses.[75] A monk suffering from the sin of pride, for instance, would feed his curiosity using his eyes and ears: "Now you begin to notice that wherever he is, standing, walking or sitting, his eyes are wandering, his glance darts right and left, his ears are cocked."[76] Of those senses, Bernard credited listening more than looking as a means of education and spiritual development.[77] This did not prevent him observing and assimilating biblical narratives expressed in visual terms.

---

[73] Cahn, "The Rule and the Book" (note 13 above), pp. 155, 164. Also Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 219–229.

[74] See above, note 43.

[75] Among many examples, see Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration*, 5.2–3, trans. Anderson and Kennan (note 49 above), p. 141, Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Grace and Free Choice*, 2.3–5, in *Treatises 3: On Grace and Free Choice. In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Daniel O'Donovan, Cistercian Fathers Series, 19 (Kalamazoo, 1977), pp. 58–59.

[76] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Steps of Humility and Pride*, 10.28, trans. M. Ambrose Conway, in *Treatises II*, The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, 5; Cistercian Fathers Series, 13 (Washington, D.C., 1974), p. 57.

[77] Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Baptism and Other Questions*, trans. Pauline Matarasso (note 64 above), p. 152: "Hearing, in any case, has to precede faith, for, in the words of the Apostle, *Faith comes from hearing* (Rom. 10:17). Since, therefore, we are quite unable to know what we have not heard, how, I ask you, can we be asked to obey what we have not been told?" Also, from Bernard's sermon for the birthday of Saint John the Baptist, "Why are your eyes so inquisitive? Do you gather together for looking, and not rather for listening? *The Lord God opened my ears*, says the prophet (Is. 50:5). He opened my ear, that I may hear what he says; he has not given light to my eye, that I may see his face." Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons for the Summer Season: Liturgical Sermons from Rogationtide and Pentecost*, trans. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and James Jarzembowski, Cistercian Fathers Series, 53 (Kalamazoo, 1991), p. 88.

Two very striking examples of this occur in his sermons. In his second sermon in praise of the Virgin Mary, written not many years after he left Cîteaux,[78] Bernard expounded in the space of a few paragraphs a series of Old Testament prefigurations of Mary: Moses and the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:2), Aaron's flowering rod which put forth leaves and bore fruit (Num. 17:8), the rod of Jesse (Is. 11:1) and Gideon's Fleece (Jud. 6:37–40). He quickly moved on to an evocation of God suckling, "when his mother was nursing at her gentle breast the tender limbs of the infant God."[79] None of these typological connections are new or unexpected. Yet Bernard catalogues and describes them in exactly the way they are pictured in a Second Style manuscript from Cîteaux, the *Vitae sanctorum*, in a miniature intended to illustrate the sermon of Fulbert of Chartres for 8 September, the Feast of the Birth of the Virgin.[80] Moses, anachronistically clutching Aaron's rod, perches on tiptoe to remove his shoe before the Burning Bush, out of which a bust of the Lord sprouts through tongue-like flames. A standing Gideon gazes upwards as the heavens seem to open to pour a greenish rainstorm on his fleece below. The words in Bernard's sermon match this depiction more closely than they do the Vulgate text, when he says "Gideon's action seems to fit in quite prettily with the prophet's words when he says: May he come down like rain upon the fleece" (Ps. 72:6). Above Moses and Gideon an enthroned Virgin labelled "Theotokos," or "Mother of God," fondly suckles with her bare breast the seated toddler Christ.

As Yolanta Załuska demonstrates, the image in the Dijon *Vitae sanctorum* cannot be entirely explained by the text of Fulbert's sermon, nor by the words of the liturgy of the day that it was meant to accompany.[81] Instead, the combination of Moses, Gideon, Jesse, the Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace, and Daniel in the Lion's den seems closest to the selection of prefigurations found in a homily for the Feast of the

[78] These sermons were allegedly written soon after the founding of Clairvaux, when Bernard was ordered by Bishop William of Champeaux to spend a year in retreat in a hut built near Clairvaux. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Magnificat* (note 53 above), p. xiv.

[79] Homily 2:5–9. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Magnificat* (note 53 above), pp. 18–21.

[80] Dijon, BM 641, fol. 40v. On the iconography of this miniature, see Załuska, *L'enluminures* (note 14 above), pp. 138–142. Fulbert's sermon, PL 141:320–24.

[81] Many of these motifs are common enough in the Office for other Marian feasts, not surprisingly, but in no case are the elements referenced in Bernard's Homily all assembled. See Waddell, *The Primitive Cistercian Breviary* (note 25 above), pp. 134, 141 (for the Nativity), p. 159 (Octave of the Nativity), for instance.

Annunciation by Honorius Augustodunensis.[82] Yet, although Honorius mentions the *Genetrix Dei*, he says nothing about a nursing Virgin, a theme powerfully evoked in combination with Moses, Aaron, Gideon, and Jesse in both Bernard's sermon and the *Vitae sanctorum* image. Thus Honorius' sermon most likely was not the direct inspiration for Bernard's, nor Bernard's the source for Honorius.

Could Bernard's homily instead have inspired the *Vitae sanctorum* miniature? After all, the manuscript is undated, and Bernard was certainly still in communication with Cîteaux at the time he wrote his second homily. For those who prefer to see Bernard's hand in all Cistercian productions after his arrival in 1113, that would make sense. Yet other traces in his work of miniatures indisputably painted before his arrival argue that this is not the only possible explanation.

Arguably Bernard's most famous work is his long and engaging commentary on the Song of Songs. Selections from the biblical book of the Song of Songs were read throughout the year as part of the liturgy, particularly on feasts associated with the Virgin Mary. These snippets of text were most likely assembled in a breviary or lectionary for use in the choir. The Song of Songs in its entirety, however, was heard every year by the monks in the choir and refectory as part of the *lectio continua* mandated by the Rule of Saint Benedict, and it was formalized in numerous customaries, including that of the Cistercians.[83] At Cîteaux during Bernard's novitiate the text would have been read from the Stephen Harding Bible, Dijon, BM 14, beginning on folio 60. Here the text opens with a brightly painted historiated initial, which depicts the words of the text using an interpretation suggested by the colourful rubrics inserted by the scribe into the interstices left at line ends.[84] These rubrics ("Vox optantis christi adventum," meaning *Ecclesia*, or Christ's heavenly spouse) before the first words of the text

---

[82] Załuska here follows J. Fournée, "Les orientations doctrinales de l'iconographie mariale à la fin de l'époque romane," *Bulletin du Centre internationale d'études romanes* (1971), 23–60. PL 172:901–08. As Valerie Flint has shown, although Honorius' works are very poorly dated, the *Speculum ecclesiae*, in which this sermon is found, was probably written very early in his career, before 1110, in England. Thus it is possible that Honorius' sermon could have inspired, in part, the *Vita sanctorum* image; see her "The Chronology of the Works of Honorius Augustodunensis," *Revue bénédictine* 82 (1972), 215–242.

[83] Griesser, "Die 'Ecclesiastica Officia'" (note 25 above), p. 208.

[84] On these rubrics and their role in the visual interpretation of the text, see Diane Reilly, "Picturing the Monastic Drama: Romanesque Bible Illustrations of the Song of Songs," *Word & Image* 17 (Winter, 2001), 389–400.

and *Vox Synagogae* between the end of verse 3 ("trahe me post te curremus; introduxit me rex in cellaria sua; exultabimus et laetabimur in te memores; uberum tuorum super vinum; recti diligunt te") and the beginning of verse 4 ("Nigra sum sed formosa, filiae Hiersalem, sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pelles Salomonis" [I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon])[85] essentially interpret the first four verses of the book as a judgement between *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga*. This theme is echoed in the initial, in which Christ blesses a standing personification of *Ecclesia* with one hand, while he ejects a now mutilated *Synagoga* from the confines of the initial with the other. While the model for these rubrics is not known, this choice is fairly unusual, and the image they inspired is unique. Yet Bernard's fourteenth sermon on the Song of Songs begins with "De iudicio Ecclesiae vel Synagogae exhibito." After plumbing the depths of the book's first three verses, among other subjects, seemingly unprompted Bernard ruminates on Christ's judgement, his rejection of *Synagoga*, because of its insistence on being judged by the Law, and his mercy towards *Ecclesia*, his new spouse.[86] In fact, Bernard does not address at length the fourth verse of the Song of Songs, the one to which the label *Vox Synagoga* is affixed in the Stephen Harding Bible, until Sermons 24, 25, and 28, and even then he equates the speaker not with the Synagogue but instead with Christ's spouse.[87] Bernard has taken his interpretive cue from the manuscript's image rather than its text, whether he absorbed it visually or aurally.

There can be no doubt that this initial was painted either before or during Bernard's stay at Cîteaux. As it is clearly inspired by the rubrics, which are attested in other, earlier manuscripts, this miniature was not Bernard's invention. At the same time, Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs are so long and complex that they encompass much of the Bible, as Bernard explores parallels between the Songs text, the

[85] For a more detailed discussion of these rubrics and the resulting image, see Diane Reilly, "Education, liturgy and manuscripts at early Cîteaux," in *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication*, ed. Steven Vanderputten, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 21 (Turnhout, forthcoming).

[86] Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, 1971), Sermon 14, pp. 97–104.

[87] Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Song*, vol. 2 (Kalamazoo, 1976), Sermons 24 and 25, pp. 42–57, Sermon 28, pp. 88–101. Bernard does mention the fourth verse briefly in sermon 3, Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, 1.16–20, again with an unrelated interpretation.

rest of the Scriptures, and the issues raised by both. The opposition of *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* is scarcely an innovative theme, and it is not surprising that Bernard mentions it. Yet the placement of this motif in alignment with its position in the Stephen Harding Bible is striking and suggestive.

Both instances of textual echoes of visual precedents in Bernard's work demonstrate the original Cîteaux patron's reasoning behind the decision to include miniatures and decoration in the scriptorium's earliest manuscripts, and why, even after Bernard so publicly rejected what he deemed superfluous in decoration, elaborately decorated manuscripts were still produced at Clairvaux and elsewhere in the Cistercian orbit. The first books commissioned by Cistercian monks, evidenced by those which survive today, were large and amply punctuated copies of patristic commentaries on the Scriptures, as well as copies of the Bible itself. Most of these manuscripts were intended to fulfil the function of providing texts for public reading, either in the choir or in the refectory or even in the cloister during public instruction.[88] While educating newly converted and sometimes only nominally literate adult novices, the lector would have employed a variety of techniques, both oral and visual, to stimulate the memories of his listeners. Like the manuscripts produced for choir and refectory reading in monasteries across Europe, these manuscripts feature highly stratified and clearly demarcated script with memorable painted initials, along with absorbing and complex interpretive images, often inspired by the accompanying text or equally relevant patristic commentary.[89] Such elaborations may be unnecessary to the mundane reader, as witnessed by the remarkably unembellished texts churned out by presses around the world today for highly literate readers most concerned with simply accessing the information a text provides. For medieval monastic readers and listeners, in contrast, and especially for Cistercians, to whom reading the Scripture formed the point of departure for spiritual meditation and enrichment, artistically ornamented and interpreted texts fostered the memorization and assimilation of both the words and their meaning.[90] It is far from surprising, then, that

[88] See Reilly, "Education, liturgy" (note 85 above).

[89] Demonstrated most recently in Conrad Rudolph, *Violence and Daily Life Reading, Art and Polemics in the Cîteaux Moralia in Job* (Princeton, 1997), passim.

[90] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 225–257.

echoes of these images can sometimes be found decades later in the output of a student, like Bernard, who encountered them in a formative period. Hence the centuries-long practice of lavishly adorning the most important manuscripts in a monastery's collection, and particularly those read aloud, continued among the Cistercians, even in the wake of their enactment of statutes intended to reign in the most fantastical imagery.

The Afterlife of the Apologia

That Bernard had little more to say about the regulation of art, architecture, or ornament does not mean that the *Apologia* itself had no effect and did not shape later Cistercian policy. Present-day commentators can be forgiven their tendency to interpret Bernard's discussion of art as the primary motivation behind his desire to draft the *Apologia*, given that from the time it was penned readers have favoured those passages for response. Saint Aelred of Rievaulx, perhaps following Bernard's intentions most closely, paralleled almost the entire contents of the *Apologia* in the *de concupiscentia oculorum* chapter of his *Speculum caritatis*. Like Bernard, Aelred condemned excessive ostentation as a distraction from the monastic life, and he singled out curiosities such as rich clothes, pictures, and sculptures for their ability to delight the eye and lead the monk away from humble contemplation.[91] Abelard, repeating portions of Bernard's *Apologia* in his rule for the nuns of the Paraclete, singled out paintings, sculpture, and overlarge buildings as particularly dangerous for the spiritual health of the nuns.[92] The Cistercian Idung of Prüfening, later in the 12th century, echoed both the words and the theme of Bernard's *Apologia* in his *Dialogue between a Cluniac and a Cistercian*, to condemn those works of art that were superfluous, adding to those listed by Bernard time gold embellishment and large capital letters in manuscripts.[93] While

[91] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 117–118, and Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art" (note 4 above), pp. 60–61, after *Speculum caritatis* 2.24, in *Aelredi rievallensis opera omnia*, 1 *Opera ascetica*, ed. Anselm Hoste and C.H. Talbot, CCCM 1:99–100.

[92] Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art" (note 4 above), p. 61, after Abelard, Ep. 8, PL 178:302, and Ep. 10, PL 178:335.

[93] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), p. 123, and Talbot, "The Cistercian attitude towards art" (note 4 above), p. 62, on Idung of Prüfening, *Dialogus duorum monachorum*, *Le moine Idung et ses deux ouvrages "Argumentum super quatuor*

Bernard never directly addressed Suger of Saint-Denis' patronage of lavish church decoration, Suger himself may have been responding to Bernard's *Apologia* in his *De administratione* and the *De consecratione* when he defended the function of colourful glass and bejewelled altar vessels as aids to meditation.[94]

Bernard's attitude towards art and beauty can be more usefully divorced from the attitudes of medieval and modern commentators if we remember that, charismatic and prolific as he was, he was also a product of the Cistercian Order he had espoused. Fifteen years before Bernard arrived at Cîteaux, a group of monks had set out from Molesme to found the New Monastery, driven by their desire to follow the Rule of Saint Benedict in all its simplicity, separated from the accretions of medieval tradition that they felt had distorted contemporary monastic life. Benedict's own flexibility and his attention to tools and environment were echoed in the tenets and practices of these early monks, and Bernard was the heir to this early Cistercian program. Examined on these terms, the *Apologia* and the 12th-century Cistercian statutes on art are consistent with these beliefs.

questionibus" et "Dialogus duorum monachorum," ed. Robert B.C. Huygens (Spoleto, 1972), 1.36, 1.40, 2.22, and 2.51.

[94] Doyle, "Rereading Saint Bernard" (note 2 above), pp. 121–122, and Panofsky, *Abbot Suger* (note 65 above), p. 15.

THE HERITAGE OF SAINT BERNARD IN MEDIEVAL ART

James France

That Bernard's personality was multi-faceted is a truism acknowledged by most Bernardine scholars. Jean Leclercq talks of "several Bernards" and says that he "has always been a paradox."[1] Adriaan Bredero calls him a controversial figure whose interventions were not universally appreciated and whose sainthood was not always recognized.[2] Brian McGuire described him as "the difficult saint."[3] Bernard himself made frequent references to the pain caused by the inconsistency between his monastic profession and his activity in the world. He likened himself to an "unfledged nestling, exposed to winds and tempests," and in another letter he pleaded to be relieved from non-monastic duties, "may it please you to bid the noisy and importunate frogs keep to their holes and remain contented with their ponds."[4] In another letter, to the Carthusians of the Grande Chartreuse, he acknowledged his own complex character in these words: "I am not as I am believed or said to be" (*Non sum talis qualis putor vel dicor*).[5] In yet another letter he referred to himself as the "chimaera of my age."[6] His choice of the title of the fire-eating monster of Greek mythology whose body was made up of three parts from different animals also reflects the great variety of ways the saint is portrayed in medieval art to serve monastic, clerical, and lay audiences.

The question arises, what can we learn from a closer look at the way Bernard was represented in medieval art? He was not originally a "popular saint" if this is defined as "those whose cult was born and

---

[1] Jean Leclercq, "Toward a Sociological Interpretation of the Various Saint Bernards," in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 19–33.

[2] Adriaan H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux. Between Cult and History* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 1.

[3] The title of his book, Brian P. McGuire, *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (Kalamazoo, 1991).

[4] Letters 12 and 48, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) [abbreviated henceforth as SBO], 7, pp. 62 and 139. C.H. Talbot is included as editor of the first two volumes, but afterwards the editors are Jean Leclercq and H.-M. Rochais alone.

[5] Letter 11, in SBO 7, p. 60.

[6] Letter 250, in SBO 8, p. 147.

developed at the lowest level of society."[7] His cult was not based on a spontaneous outburst of popular lay devotion subsequently endorsed by the official Church; instead it resulted from the initiative of his own monks. Most active was his friend and secretary Geoffrey of Auxerre, who, most telling of all, already eight years before Bernard's death initiated the writing of his Life, the *Vita prima.* Bernard's cult was of supreme importance within the Cistercian family, in the foundation of so many of whose houses Bernard had been either directly or indirectly involved. His saintliness was acknowledged by many of his contemporaries, even those who had not always agreed with him. Thus Orderic Vitalis gave him the accolade *venerabilis* as early as 1135.[8] Otto of Freising, who, although himself a Cistercian, opposed Bernard's stand against Gilbert de la Porrée and Abelard, nevertheless referred to Bernard as "venerable in life and character, conspicuous in his religious order, endowed with wisdom and a knowledge of letters, renowned for his signs and wonders…who was looked upon by all the peoples of France and Germany as a prophet and apostle."[9] Peter the Venerable, whose relationship with Bernard was also strained over their views of Abelard, referred to Bernard as the "fellow-citizen of the angels" (*concivis angelorum*).[10] Although celebrated in the wider monastic and religious world, Bernard's cult was at first minimal among the general populace, as witnessed by an analysis of Christian names and church dedications in Burgundy following his canonization in 1174.[11]

To his monks, many of whose monasteries owed their foundation to Bernard, his legacy was all-important. All three authors of the *Vita prima* described him as a "man of God" (*vir Dei*). The monks' decision to bury him in the church at Clairvaux was in itself testimony to the veneration in which he was held at his death, for, according to

---

[7] André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 142.

[8] Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans. *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969–80), 3:340.

[9] Charles Mierow, trans. *Otto of Freising. The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa* (New York, 1953), pp. 70–71.

[10] Giles Constable, ed. *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1967), 1:416.

[11] For this, see James France, *The Cistercians in Medieval Art* (Kalamazoo, 1998), pp. 333–334.

Cistercian usage, burial in the church was restricted to bishops and royal and princely families. However, the danger to monastic discipline was recognized almost immediately upon Bernard's death. In the *Exordium magnum*, Conrad of Eberbach records several cures that occurred before Bernard's coffin and says that the abbot of Cîteaux who had come to assist at the funeral "was greatly worried that the increase in miracles would attract a large multitude whose unruly behaviour might compromise the discipline of the order"; therefore, he forbade the body "in the name of obedience, to perform any further miracles," and as a result, "from that day until now he has never been seen to perform any miracles in public."[12] Unusually, there is no mention of miracles among the testimonials to sainthood in Pope Alexander's letter of January 1174 sanctioning the veneration of Bernard such as had featured in the canonisations around this time: those of Edward the Confessor in 1161, Knud Lavard in 1169, and Thomas Becket in 1173.[13]

The abbot of Cîteaux's attempt to curb the cult of Bernard may also have put a damper on the portrayals of the saint in art. More important, however, was Bernard's own opposition to figural representations in a Cistercian context. His celebrated diatribe in the *Apology* to William of Saint Thierry against "a fantastic conglomeration of beauty misbegotten and ugliness transmogrified"[14] has traditionally been interpreted as directed against the excesses of Cluniac cloister carvings but may also have been aimed at the exuberance of the Cîteaux manuscript illuminations under Bernard's former abbot, Stephen Harding.[15] According to Bernard, both types of decoration were inappropriate for monks on account of their extravagance and distractive influence. The exuberance and high artistic quality which had characterized the richly illuminated manuscripts produced in the scriptorium at Cîteaux during the abbacy of Stephen Harding was short-lived. It gave way to

[12] *Exordium magnum* 2.20, in *Exordium magnum Cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961), pp. 116–118.

[13] Bredero, *Between Cult and History* (note 2 above), pp. 70–72.

[14] *Apologia* 29, in Pauline Matarasso, trans. *The Cistercian World* (Harmondsworth, 1993), p. 57.

[15] Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance." Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia, 1990).

what has been described as the "monochrome style" in accordance with Bernardine ideals.[16]

Surprisingly, the earliest known portrayal of Bernard in manuscript illumination, and the only one known to have been produced during his lifetime, was neither Cistercian nor French. It dates from before 1135 and was written in the scriptorium of the Benedictine abbey of Saint Augustine in Canterbury (Fig. 1). It is evidence of the popularity and early dispersion of Bernard's writings even outside the Order. Appropriately, Bernard is depicted in a manuscript described by Geoffrey of Auxerre as his first treatise (*primus opus illius*),[17] *The Steps of Humility*, probably composed in 1119.[18] Bernard places it first in the list of his writings which he gives in Letter 18, dated 1126.[19] It is a pastoral work in which Bernard the monk is addressing his fellow monks on monastic values, and which he had been asked to write by one of the first monks of Clairvaux, Godfrey, who was later abbot of Fontenay, then resigned and became prior of Clairvaux and, finally, bishop of Langres in 1138. It may have been one of the books Bernard referred to in his Letter 74 (1125–31) asking the abbot of Foigny to "please return as soon as you can those books of mine which you have borrowed,"[20] presumably so that they could be copied.

Bernard is depicted against a gold background as a young tonsured monk, sitting at a desk writing. He is shown in profile, the conventional way of depicting the evangelists, which in turn was based on late Antique author portraits. In his right hand he holds a pen and

---

[16] Yolanta Załuska, *L'enluminure et le scriptorium de Cîteaux au XIIe siècle* (Cîteaux, 1989), pp. 149–167. It is true, as Diane J. Reilly states in her chapter in this volume, that "Bernard never mentioned manuscript decoration." And yet, it seems to me more than a coincidence that during the abbacy of Stephen Harding's successor, Raynald de Bar, a monk of Clairvaux and close friend of Bernard, the 'monochrome style' came to dominate in the Cîteaux scriptorium (according to Załuska from *c.*1140), and that it was decreed that letters were to be of one colour and without pictorial representation. I therefore find Jean-Baptiste Auberger's interpretation of the divergence between Stephen Harding and Bernard (*L'unanimité cistercienne primitive: mythe ou réalité* [Achel, 1986], p. 315) as well as Rudolph's theory that the *Apologia* was aimed not only at Cluniac cloister carvings but also at the Cîteaux illuminations to be convincing.

[17] *Vita prima* [abbreviated henceforth as VP] 3.8.29; in Migne PL 185:320.

[18] For the dating, see Christopher Holdsworth, "The Reception of St Bernard in England," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux—Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und der Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 34–35, who suggests that it may have been a kind of farewell present when Godfrey went to Fontenay.

[19] Letter 18, in SBO 7, p. 69.

[20] Letter 74, in SBO 7, p. 181.

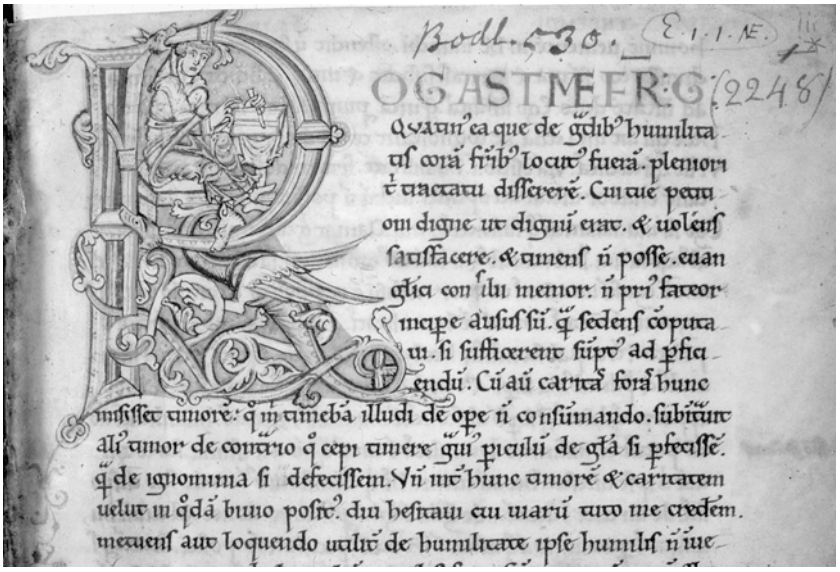


Fig. 1 The earliest known image of Bernard. The opening initial of his first treatise *The Steps of Humility*. From the Benedictine abbey of St Augustine, Canterbury. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 530, f. 15r.

in his left hand a knife which is placed on the open book before him. He is portrayed within the initial *R*(*ogasti me, frater G*[*aufride*]), the opening words of the preface in which he states how he came to write it: "You asked me, Brother Godfrey, to write out at greater length the sermons I gave the brethren on the Steps of Humility."[21]

There are two known images of Bernard from the period between his death in 1153 and his canonization in 1174, both from the scriptorium of the Benedictine abbey of Anchin (Nord, France). Both are more than conventional representational images in which Bernard is merely portrayed and recognized by the traditional attributes, sometimes aided by inscriptions, and by the context in which they appear. Both tell a story. In one, Bernard is shown in a double "portrait" which reveals the influence he had on a young named disciple, while the other represents the highest quality of pictorial theology encapsulating Bernard's teaching on humility based on Benedict's Rule.

[21] SBO 3, p. 16.

The first pre-canonization image is a historiated initial marking the opening of the letter Bernard wrote to Aelred, at the time a young monk and later abbot of Rievaulx, asking him to put down his thoughts "so that we may see in what you write, as if in a mirror, what charity is" (Fig. 2). It begins with the same theme of humility as the Canterbury manuscript: *E(st quidem sanctorum virtus permaxima humilitas, sed si vera, sed si discreta)* [The great virtue of the saints is humility, but a sincere and discreet humility].[22] Although Aelred advanced the customary excuse of unworthiness, Bernard invoked the primacy of obedience when he asked Aelred "where is the humility in refusing to consent to my wishes?" As a concession to Aelred's feelings Bernard ordered that his letter be placed at the beginning of Aelred's work and even gave it its title, *The Mirror of Charity*. That explains the image of Bernard at the top of the left-hand folio sitting within the golden opening initial *E*. In his left hand he has a scroll—the text of his letter to Aelred which follows—and two of his fingers are raised in blessing. He has a simple pastoral staff in his right hand. He is facing right and looking down to the figure on the lower, far right half of the opposite folio, a young tonsured monk in a white habit holding a scroll of his own work which follows and is identified by the words above his head *Ailred(us) mo(nachus)*—"Aelred the monk." He is sitting within the initial *V*, the opening words of the treatise below.

The second pre-canonization image is another historiated initial illustrating *The Steps of Humility*, but this time in a revised version which begins not with the Preface, as was the case with the Canterbury manuscript, but with a *Rectractio*, a postscript placed at the beginning in which Bernard explains how he had erred by misquoting the Bible.[23] The large full-page initial *I* introducing the text consists of a ladder, the one Jacob saw in a dream stretching from earth to heaven (Gen. 28:12) with heaven being the reward for a long apprenticeship in humility, the kernel of Saint Benedict's teaching contained in the famous definition of a monastery as "a school of the Lord's service,"[24] a theme taken up by Bernard. At the bottom of the ladder Jacob is

[22] SBO 8, p. 489.

[23] James France, *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 2007). The image is illustrated on the CD-Rom appended to this as MA028. All subsequent images on the CD-Rom will only be referred to by the image code number and will be given in the text adjacent to the image described.

[24] *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, trans. Justin McCann, 2nd ed. (London, 1976), p. 4.

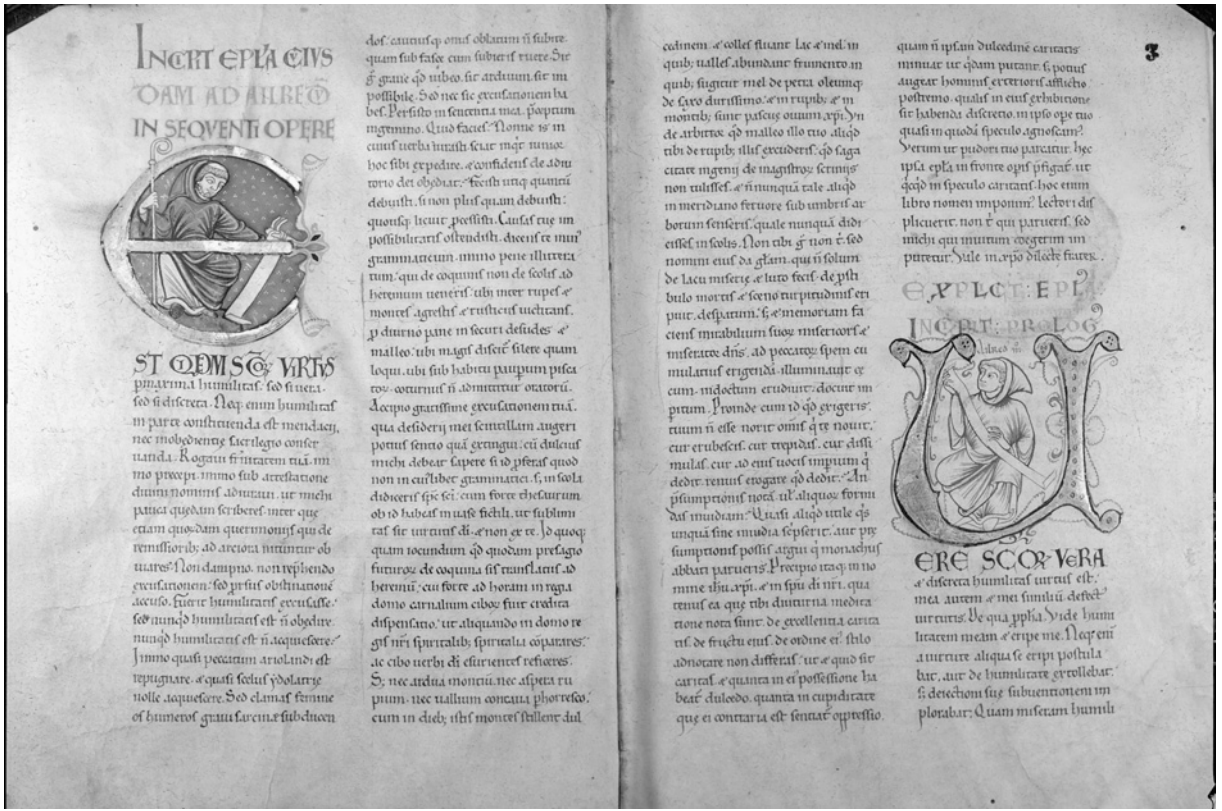


Fig. 2 Bernard orders Aelred of Rievaulx to write *The Mirror of Charity*. A twelfth-century manuscript from the scriptorium of the Benedictine abbey of Anchin. Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 392, f. 2v & f. 3r.

asleep; at the top Christ is flanked by the half-figures of Benedict on the left in a brown habit seen writing his Rule and Bernard on the right in a white habit carrying a book and a primitive crozier. The book carried by Bernard is traditionally the Rule, but here it is more likely to refer to his own work.

There are nine further known images from the last quarter of the 12th century. In the same way that none of the first three images were of Cistercian origin but were produced in Benedictine scriptoria, five of the nine images were likewise not Cistercian: two were Benedictine, one Premonstratensian, and two were of unknown provenance (MA025, MA327, MA119, MA026, MA040).

For some decades a policy of restraint in manuscript illumination had been enforced at Clairvaux under Bernard's influence. It had been extended to the whole Order and given rise to the "monochrome style," but in the long run the appeal of figural representations of the human form, for which the early Cîteaux scriptorium was noted, was too great and the legislation which had forbidden had become a dead letter. From the late 12th century, Cistercian manuscript illumination became indistinguishable from what was found elsewhere. Significantly, the earliest known examples of deviation from the Cistercian ideal of simplicity and austerity come from abbeys far removed from the cradle lands of the Order in Burgundy and Champagne, from Zwettl and Heiligenkreux in Austria and from Stična in Slovenia.

Early Portrayals of Bernard by His Own Monks

Of the nine late 12th-century images, four introduce his biography in manuscripts of the *Vita prima*, three are illustrations of his own works, and two adorn the pages of service books. One of the latter is in a missal from Zwettl in Austria dated 1175–76, only a year or two after Bernard's canonization, and is the earliest of all images of Bernard produced in a Cistercian scriptorium. Bernard stands to the left of the initial *T(e igitur)*, the beginning of the Canon of the Mass, before an altar at which he is celebrating Mass (MA002). With his head inclined, his thin face and large cranium, a beard and a drooping moustache, there is a distinct similarity to the way he is described by Geoffrey of Auxerre in the *Vita prima*, although there is unlikely to be a connection.[25] He is wearing an alb, stole, and a simple chasuble. In

[25] VP 3:3:1; PL 185:303.

his left hand he holds a chalice which he blesses with his right hand. The Host lies on the altar. The scene is blessed by the hand of God which comes down from above.

A closer look at this and the other early Bernardine images reveals a number of peculiarities compared with later images. First, as in a number of other images (MA023, MA025, MA071, MA164), Bernard's halo is a solid blue dish, whereas in later images the convention was to depict halos as a golden ring or a solid gold dish. Second, while Bernard is depicted carrying a book—the Rule of Saint Benedict—in a very large number of representations, this attribute is found in only one of the early images, the large initial *I* at the beginning of *The Steps of Humility*, and there the book is included as representing Bernard's treatise and not the Rule. Third, and perhaps connected with the absence of the book, Bernard is depicted in an abnormally large number of instances with his hand raised in blessing, symbolizing his solicitude for his monks (MA001, MA002, MA004, MA026). Fourth, Bernard is also depicted in an unusually large number of early images wearing eucharistic vestments in which he is only rarely found in later representations. This testifies to the importance the early Cistercians attached to the exercise of abbatial authority through priesthood (MA001, MA002, MA026).

Fifth, four of the nine late 12th-century images decorate manuscripts of the five books of the *Vita prima*, representing the dossier required for the canonization of Bernard and subsequently also of vital importance for the edification of his monks. It was designed to promote the cult of Bernard, not only in Cistercian monasteries. One of the four, unusually adorning the beginning of Book Three by Geoffrey of Auxerre and not the Preface or Book One as was otherwise always the case, came from the Premonstratensian abbey of Windberg, evidence of the early dispersal outside the Cistercian Order (MA119). A composite manuscript from Zwettl in Austria, dated *c.*1189 and including the *Vita prima*, has a youthful Bernard in the upper half of the initial *B(ernardus)*, the opening word of Book One (MA001). It goes on to announce Bernard's birth at Châtillon in Burgundy of illustrious parents. The figure in the lower half of the initial depicted sitting at a desk and writing is the author, William of Saint Thierry, Bernard's great friend and biographer, in what is the only known early medieval "portrait" of him. In another composite manuscript from Austria which contains the *Vita prima*, Bernard is again depicted in the upper half of the opening initial *B*, but this time alone. In another manuscript probably from a Cistercian abbey, possibly German or Flemish,

Bernard is shown standing within a narrow building with a pitched roof resembling a sentry box and adjacent to a large five-line initial *S* at the opening of the Preface to Book One of the *Vita prima* (Fig. 3). He has a blue halo, is nimbed, and is dressed in a blue chasuble with white spots, an alb, and a brown stole. His right hand is raised in blessing. In his left hand he has a crozier of the primitive design with a simple volute separated from the staff by a circular knob.

It is notable that in these early *Vita prima* manuscripts, the images of Bernard are purely representational and there are no examples of narrative scenes of the many miracles and legends so graphically described in the text. As we shall see, imaginative scenes from this and other sources were to form an important part of his iconography and to take him out of the cloister into a much wider world.



Fig. 3 Bernard at the opening of the Preface to Book One of the *Vita prima.* Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, Leicestershire, England, MS MSB 1.

Thirteenth-Century Manuscript Images of Bernard

With the exception of Bernard's seal matrix which, if authentic, is from the middle of the 12th century and is thought to be the one he himself referred to in a letter as including "both my name and my image" (*continente et imaginem nostram et nomen*),[26] all known 12th-century Bernardine images are only found in manuscripts. Likewise the overwhelming majority of the 60-odd known representations from the 13th century also come in the form of manuscript illuminations.

Prominent among these are images of Bernard in service books, most notably those in Antiphonaries within the historiated initial *P(rima virtus viri sancti)*, the first Responsory of the first Nocturn from Vigils on his feast, a visual celebration in the early hours of the day dedicated to his commemoration. Examples may be seen from all corners of Europe. The earliest of all shows Bernard blessing three kneeling nuns in white habits with black veils (MA035). It is dated late 12th or early 13th century. Although the provenance is not known, it most likely originated in a house of Cistercian nuns in Flanders or Northern France and is of particular interest because it is the earliest known representation of Cistercian nuns. Remarkably, considering that the growth of women's monasteries was at first very slow but accelerated enormously in the 13th century, there are two further examples of Bernardine images within the initial *P* from women's houses. One comes from the celebrated nuns' abbey of Arouca in Portugal, made famous by Mafalfa who after the death of her husband, the king of Castile, took the veil there. Bernard is depicted standing and pointing in a teaching mode (Fig. 4). He is in a greyish cowl with his hood partially over his head. As in a number of early portrayals, his halo is blue. The other is from the nuns' abbey of Beaupré (MA212). It is one of 14 historiated initials in the magnificent antiphonary from the late 13th century which, although it belonged to the nuns, may have been made in the scriptorium of the monks' abbey of Cambron in Northern France. Bernard is depicted in the centre of the initial *P* in a frontal position of authority with a book—the Rule—in his right hand and a crozier in his left hand. He is flanked by a kneeling nun on each side, both in grey with black veils and white wimples. Another early example, from the beginning of the 13th century, comes from the Catalan abbey of Poblet

[26] Letter 284, in SBO 8, p. 199.



Fig. 4 Bernard within the initial *P* in an antiphonary from the Cistercian nuns' abbey of Arouca, Portugal. Arouca, Museu de Arte Sacra, MS D, f. 66v.

(MA104). Bernard is shown in a three-quarter figure raising his right hand in a teaching mode while holding a roll of parchment representing his writings in his left hand. In an antiphonary from the abbey of Saint Urban in Switzerland, Bernard is depicted in eucharistic vestments as we have seen in a number of other early images (MA047). He is shown blessing two monks. A later example, from the last quarter of the 13th century, comes from Lubiaz (Leubus) in Poland/Germany in which Bernard is shown with a crozier in his left hand and a long scroll, representing his work, in his right hand, which he is showing to a smaller monk (MA070).

Also from the end of the century, an antiphonary from Morimondo in Northern Italy has Bernard standing on the right within the initial *P* (MA291). He has a book in his left hand while his right hand is raised in blessing a group of seven tonsured monks on the left who are all, like him, in white habits. In yet another late 13th-century Italian manuscript from a Cistercian abbey in the neighbourhood of Emilia, a bearded and nimbed Bernard in a white cowl is standing to the left within the initial *P* (MA423). Both his hands are outstretched, his right hand pointing to a group of seven smaller monks on the right. These examples from many countries are not strictly narrative, but they are more than merely representational in that they express the debt his monks and nuns owed to his writings and the way in which he was acknowledged by them as a great teacher. It is in this capacity that they chose to celebrate his feast.

One image within the initial *P* is different from the above in that it shows Bernard not as a writer or a teacher but in what is the earliest known narrative image depicting a legend from his life. Dated 1260–70, it is found in a fragment from an antiphonary which it is thought may have come from the abbey of Cambron in Northern France (MA106). Bernard is shown in eucharistic vestments of chasuble, stole, and maniple, coming out of a church after celebrating Mass. Duke William of Aquitaine, who had been excommunicated, was therefore not allowed in the church and met Bernard outside. Bernard holds a paten in his hands on which is placed the consecrated Host which he displays to the duke, who is thereby converted and falls to the ground before Bernard in accordance with the *Vita prima* account of his visit to Southern France to combat heresy.[27] The duke

[27] VP 2.6.37–38; PL 185:289–90.

is accompanied by a soldier who stands behind him carrying a spear, and Bernard is accompanied by a monk who stands in the doorway of the church holding Bernard's crozier. The event celebrates Bernard's success in combating heresy.

As is only to be expected, artists also chose to celebrate Bernard as an author by decorating the opening initials of his works with his image. Among them, an early 13th-century manuscript from the English abbey of Buildwas has Bernard in a frontal position sitting on a stool within the initial *H(odie)* at the opening of his Sermon 1 for Advent (MA061). A French composite manuscript from the second half of the 13th century shows Bernard within the diminutive initial *D(omino abbati Columbensi)* from the opening of his treatise *On Precept and Dispensation* (MA051). He is sitting at a desk on which there is an open book in which he is writing. Close to his face is the beak of a bird, the dove of the Holy Spirit feeding him with the words he is writing down, the conventional attribute of the Evangelists and the Doctors of the Church and a sign that he was writing under divine inspiration. In a 13th-century manuscript from the Cistercian abbey of Bledzow in Poland, the standing Bernard is depicted within the initial *C(onsidero laborem)*, the beginning of the Prologue of his sermon on the psalm *Qui habitat* as indicated by the text in red at the head of the folio (MA319).[28] He has the hood of his grey cowl over his head, is bearded, and is pointing to a long scroll which has the opening words of Psalm 90: *qui habitat in adjutorio altissimi*. The beginning of one of Bernard's letters, the famous Letter 174 addressed to the Canons of Lyons opposing their decision to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, has a historiated initial *I(nter ecclesias)* in which Bernard is depicted in a white cowl (MA186). With his right hand raised he points in admonishment at the two tonsured figures representing the canons.

The most common place of all in which to find images illustrating Bernard's work is at the beginning of Sermon One *On the Song of Songs*, the first of the 86 sermons which he began in 1135 and which were unfinished at his death in 1153. In an early 13th-century manuscript from the Austrian abbey of Zwettl, a half-figure of a bearded Bernard is featured within the opening initial *V(obis fratres, alia quam aliis de saeculo, aut certe aliter dicenda sunt)*: "The instructions which I

[28] SBO 4, p. 383.

address to you, my brothers, will differ from those I should deliver to people in the world" (MA342). As in many early images he is depicted as a priest wearing a chasuble, and his right hand is raised in blessing. Other examples testify to the early dispersion of what was his most celebrated work, even outside the Cistercian Order. The earliest example of all comes from the Benedictine abbey of Liesborn and is dated *c.*1180 (MA025). Here the initial *V* is formed by the body of a dragon whose swirling body, together with bodies of other smaller animals, leaves two circular areas open. In the upper circle the bust of a figure with a blue halo is identified by the inscription above: *Bernhardus abbas*. He holds a scroll across his body which reads, *Obedite prepositis vestris* ("Obey them that have rule over you"; Heb. 13:17), denoting his authority as abbot. The lower circle has six small monks gazing up at Bernard. Two Italian examples are evidence of the widespread popularity of Bernard's Sermons *On the Song of Songs* among religious of other Orders: a late 13th-century manuscript from the Franciscan Convent of Santa Maria in Aracoeli and a slightly later one from the Dominican nuns of Saint Mark in Florence, both of which have a bearded Bernard sitting at a desk on which is an open book. In one Bernard's hand is raised in blessing and two monks are sitting in front of him (MA230), while in the other there are seven monks sitting below him, six of them looking up at him while the seventh in front is seated at a desk on which is an open book into which he is copying the opening words *Vobis fratres* (MA262).

The Emergence of Bernardine Images in Other Media

The policy of restraint limiting artistic expression was not confined to figural representations in early Cistercian manuscript illumination; regulations encompassing other media were also enacted. Legislation which had decreed that "letters are to be of one colour and without pictorial representation" and "glass windows are to be clear, without crosses and pictures" was supplemented by another regulation which forbad "sculptures and paintings in our churches."[29] Bernard's thinking was perfectly reflected in the motivation given: "because while one's attention is directed to such things, the advantage of good meditation

[29] Chrysogonus Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Cîteaux, 1999), pp. 464 and 491.

or the discipline of monastic seriousness is often neglected." In the same way that the earliest deviations from the Bernardine ideal in manuscript illumination were produced in Benedictine scriptoria, the earliest known examples of Bernardine images in the form of statues, glass, and panel painting were not of Cistercian origin. One example of each can be dated to the late 13th century. Further examples have to wait until the 14th century. In the long run it proved impossible to enforce the legislation, but for a long time there was little need for such decorative articles in their primitive churches. And yet, earlier attempts to introduce them must have been made, for in 1240 the General Chapter ordered that "all multi-coloured painted panels" (*omnes tabulae depictae diversis coloribus*) be removed or painted over as white, evidence of the vigilance needed to resist a change.[30]

The first known statue of Bernard is located in the northeastern corner of the West Tower of Freiburg Cathedral (SC01). From *c.*1280, it commemorates Bernard's visit to Freiburg in early December 1146. Stone statues of Bernard were later frequently found in Cistercian churches. The best known is perhaps the small late 14th-century sandstone statue with traces of polychrome which is thought to have adorned Bernard's tomb at Clairvaux (SC04). His right hand is missing, but in it he would have held a crozier. In his left hand he carries a model of a church, the traditional way of portraying the founder of a church.

The earliest stained glass window featuring Bernard is dated *c.*1290 and comes from the pilgrimage church of Saint Michael bei Leoben in Steirmark, Austria (GL71). A bearded Bernard in a grey cowl carries a crozier and book—the Rule—in his right hand while his left hand is raised in blessing. He is identified by the inscription *S. Bernardus*.

Of greatest interest is the altarpiece from Palma, Majorca, an example of the early type of retable consisting of a full-length depiction of Bernard in a frontal position denoting his authority and flanked by two square images on each side within separate compartments (Fig. 5). It is modelled on some of the earliest altarpieces, notably those of Saint Francis. Dated *c.*1290, it is not only the earliest known altarpiece featuring Bernard but also has the first known representation of the *Lactation*. However, like the statue and stained glass window

[30] *Statuta* 1240:12, in ed. J.-M. Canivez, *Statuta Capitularum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad 1786*, 8 vols (Louvain, 1933–41), 2:218.



Fig. 5 Retable from the church of the Templars at Palma, Majorca, 1290. Reproduced by permission of the Museu de Mallorca.

just mentioned, it is not of Cistercian origin but was in the church of the Templars in Palma. One of the scenes, below on the left, has a rare depiction of Bernard's friend, the Irish archbishop Malachy, based on Geoffrey of Auxerre's account in the *Vita prima*.[31] Geoffrey refers to Bernard's authorship of Malachy's *Life* and tells how Christ revealed himself to Bernard one day as he was celebrating Mass in order to assure him that Malachy was with him in heaven. As a result, Bernard decided to change the form of prayer, adding the Collect used for saint-bishops and not the one commending the dead, even though Malachy had not yet been canonized. Bernard is shown kneeling before an altar upon which is the book with the prayer he had just read. Bernard is gazing up at the smaller cross-nimbed half-figure of Christ in the clouds attended by two angels. On the left, six monks stand before a lectern on which is an open book, amazed that the text before them, to which one of the monks is pointing, does not correspond to Bernard's prayer.

Expansion of the Cult of Bernard

One of the most important factors in the widespread expansion of the cult of Bernard—first to religious outside the Cistercian family, then to the clerical community, and finally to the wider lay world—was the inclusion of a very extensive chapter on Bernard in the *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend) compiled around 1265 by the Dominican James of Voragine, later archbishop of Genoa. This was the most important of a number of *Lectionaries* or collections of readings, which was used in the Office, provided material for preaching, and was destined to become one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages. While only 130 manuscripts of the *Vita prima* have survived, nearly all belonging to monasteries, there are still more than 1,000 copies of the *Legenda Aurea* in existence. A considerably wider audience was also reached owing to its translation into a number of languages, the most popular of which were those into French by Jean de Vignay, of which a number were illustrated. The chapters varied enormously in length according to the source material available. James obtained virtually all his material from the *Vita prima*, and as a result the chapter on

[31] VP 4.4.21; PL 185:333.

Bernard was one of the most exhaustive.[32] In a modern translation, for example, 12 pages are devoted to Bernard while only six are devoted to Saint Catherine, four to Saint Jerome, and two each to Saint Mark and Saint Thomas of Canterbury.[33] On account of the extensive material available, the prominence given to Bernard was disproportionate when compared to that of many other saints. Knowledge of his life was disseminated throughout Europe in a way that would otherwise not have been the case, and this led to a tremendous growth in his cult. He no longer belonged just to his monks but gained a much wider audience, even among lay people. Artists were inspired to portray narrative scenes from Bernard's life, either single or as a series in the form of a cycle, and a number of other legendary themes arose, not always based on a known literary source.

Although the great majority of *Golden Legend* manuscripts were not illustrated, they provided artists with a wealth of material on which to draw. A rare exception is a fully illustrated manuscript written in 1362 which contains miniatures by one hand of all the saints, although only as single figure representational images identified by the usual attributes. It is in an Alsatian dialect of German and probably came from Strasburg. A standing figure of Bernard in a grey cowl has a red crozier with a gold volute in his right hand and a green book with clasps—the Rule—in his left (Fig. 6). He is bearded and nimbed. The background consists of green leaves within a red frame. The text in red ink above has *von dem namen B'nhardi*, which tells us that the text which follows is the etymology of the name based largely on James' fertile imagination and at the end of which he acknowledges his debt to the authors of the *Vita prima*, William of Saint Thierry and Arnold of Bonneval, while curiously omitting to mention Geoffrey of Auxerre. The biographical information proper, which goes on to record Bernard's birth in Burgundy at the chateau of Fontaines, is introduced in red ink at the foot of the page with the words *von Sant Bernhard*.

---

[32] For Bernard in the *Golden Legend*, see Brian Patrick McGuire, "A Saint's Afterlife. Bernard in the Golden Legend and in Other Medieval Collections," *Bernhard von Clairvaux—Rezeption und Wirkung*, ed. Kaspar Elm (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 179–211.

[33] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend* (Harmondsworth, 1998).



Fig. 6 Bernard in a manuscript of the *Golden Legend* dated 1362. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Cgm 6, f. 143r.

The Emergence of a Bernardine Image Type—The Amplexus

Increase in the knowledge of Bernard was greatly enhanced following the wide dissemination of the *Golden Legend*, especially outside the Cistercian Order. Parallel to this, however, a wealth of manuscripts and later printed books containing his writings appeared, further contributing to his stature outside Cistercian circles. Added to these were a number of writings wrongly attributed to him and, finally, a wealth of apocryphal material, all of which contributed to the way in which he was viewed and much of which found an expression in a number of image types.

The first of these, and the only one which is truly Bernardine in origin, was the *Amplexus Bernardi*, that is, Christ removing his arms from the Cross, bending down, and embracing the figure of Bernard kneeling down before him. It was to become one of the most popular representations of the saint in the late Middle Ages. It was one of the four iconographical *topoi* which have been described as "scene-attributes"[34]—that is, scenes based on popular stories by which Bernard may be identified in the same way as he usually is by the traditional attributes of cowl, crozier and book, and halo which refer to him as monk, abbot, and saint.

It is first found in a collection known as *Liber Miraculorum* compiled by Herbert of Clairvaux in the last quarter of the 12th century, but it is better known from its inclusion, with many of the other stories, in Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum* in the early 13th century. According to this, Menard, the former abbot of Mores, told how a monk, thought to be himself, had witnessed the following:

> I heard of a certain monk who once found the blessed abbot Bernard alone in Church deep in prayer prostrate before the altar, a cross with its crucified appeared placed on the floor in front of him. This the most blessed man devoutly adored and kissed. Then that Majesty removed his arms from the branches of the cross and he seemed to embrace the servant of God and draw him to himself.[35]

---

[34] Cécile Dupeux, "Saint Bernard dans l'iconographie médiévale: l'exemple de la lactation," in *Vies et légendes de Saint Bernard de Clairvaux*, ed. P. Arabeyre, J. Berlioz, and P. Poirrier (Cîteaux, 1993), p. 157.

[35] *Exordium magnum*, ed. Griesser (note 12 above), pp. 102–103.

According to the monk who witnessed the scene, Bernard's life was "beyond the human condition," and the embrace by the crucified Christ signalled divine approval of the Cistercian way of life. Thereby the confidence of the monks who had been under increasing attack since the death of Bernard, especially in Conrad's native Germany, was bolstered.

The earliest known *Amplexus* image, dating to the first half of the 14th century, is in a Gradual from the Cistercian nuns' abbey of Wonnental in Breisgau, Baden (MA059). Within the initial *O* Bernard is depicted kneeling before Christ, who, partially descended from the cross, is embracing him. A smaller kneeling monk with hands folded in prayer may represent the monk who witnessed the vision in the original story. The two nails for the hands are still attached to the cross, which is surmounted by the traditional inscription INRI ("Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews"). The fact that the cross is embedded in the ground out of doors, thus transferring it from inside the church at Clairvaux to Calvary, connects the scene more closely with the actual Passion. Nearly a century was to pass before the next known depiction of the *Amplexus.* Curiously, this is used as an illustration in a manuscript dated 1419 of the *Lives of Saints* in an Alsatian dialect of German derived from the *Golden Legend* in which the story is not recorded. Similarly, the *Amplexus* scene is used to decorate an almost contemporary manuscript of a French version of the *Golden Legend* translated by Jean de Vignay, which, according to an inscription, belonged to the nobleman Charles de Croy (MA152).

The theme was also immensely popular with the Cistercians, who used it to adorn a number of their manuscripts and churches. Among them is a stained glass window at Wettingen in Switzerland (GL81); a pen and ink drawing in a Missal dated 1440–50 from Heilsbronn in Germany in the only recorded example of the motif where the scene is witnessed by the Virgin and Saint John (DR20); one of five painted scenes from the life of Bernard dated 1432 on the wings of an altarpiece from Maulbronn (PA060); a carved altarpiece dated 1496 from Esrum in Denmark; and two separate figures—Christ on the Cross and Bernard—carved in limewood and painted, attributed to Michel Erhart from the beginning of the 16th century and in the nuns" church at Oberschönenfeld in Bavaria (SC32). In a number of these there is a difference in scale, with Bernard being depicted larger than Christ.

A considerable development took place between the original literary source and the much later pictorial representations of the theme.

First of all, the siting had been moved, in the majority of cases, from the Clairvaux of the vision to Golgotha, thus linking Bernard with the biblical account of the Crucifixion. Furthermore, in early representations just as in the literary account, the initiative rests entirely with Christ. Later, Bernard's passivity was at first replaced in the visual representations by what appears as a mutual embrace. In later examples, Christ's body is often portrayed as totally lifeless, with his full weight being borne by Bernard in what is reminiscent of a Deposition scene. A rare exception is found in a late example, a small (21.5 cm diameter) grisaille glass roundel in which the initiative is very much with Christ, who not only removes his arms from the branches of the cross as recounted in the story but comes down from the cross altogether (Fig. 7). Christ is about to embrace Bernard, who is grasping Christ's



Fig. 7 *Amplexus* image in a small late medieval grisaille glass roundel. Collection C.J. Berserik, The Hague.

right hand. It is the only known image of its kind. The scene is set in a church in accordance with the original account of the vision. In the background a small monk is peering from behind a pillar. As in the earliest *Amplexus* image from Wonnental, he probably represents the monk who witnessed the scene, thought to be Abbot Menard himself. Such roundels were popular in the late Middle Ages, especially in the rich cities of the South Netherlands and the Rhineland. Here they were among the precious objects with which influential burghers liked to surround themselves. They were status symbols on a par with the Books of Hours their wives might possess. They were also frequently used as gifts to churches and religious orders.[36]

One of the strangest phenomena of the iconography of Bernard, and one for which no explanation has as far as I know been advanced, is why it took so long for such an obvious motif as the *Amplexus* to find expression in art. Why, since it would have been well known to the Cistercians, did it take more than a century before it appeared in iconography and yet another century before it can be said to have become popular? The theme is pure Bernard, based on his theology centred on Christ's sacrifice on the cross, a corollary of Christ's full participation in our humanity, and a theme which recurs time and again in his works. Quoting from Saint Paul, "I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2), in his famous Sermon 43 on the Song of Songs—known by the opening words *Fasciculus myrrhae* (a little bundle of myrhh; Sg. 1:2)—Bernard reminded his monks of the need "to preserve without fail the memory of all those bitter things He endured for you."[37] Perhaps this is less in tune with the devotional climate of the 13th and 14th centuries than of the 15th and early 16th.

Passion imagery seems to have become increasingly popular in the last century of the Middle Ages, especially in German-speaking lands where the majority of *Amplexus* images are found. New themes emerged, such as the Pièta, the Man of Sorrows, and the Instruments of the Passion or *Arma Christi.* Passion imagery also became increasingly popular in the iconography of Bernard. It may be seen, for example, in a highly expressionistic, almost modern, pen and ink drawing of the Crucifixion in which Bernard and a Cistercian nun kneel at

[36] C.J. Berserik and J.M.A. Caen, *Silver-Stained Roundels and unipartite Panels before the French Revolution* (Turnhout, 2007).
[37] SBO 2, p. 41.

the foot of the cross, both grasping the legs of Christ with one hand and the cross with the other (DR10). Christ's body is depicted bright red with torrents of blood in keeping with the ecstatic visions of the Crucified associated especially with the late medieval spirituality of Cistercian nuns. Although it is not an *Amplexus* image in that both of Christ's arms are attached to the cross and there is no indication of an embrace, the very physical and almost sensual presentation closely resembles late medieval *Amplexus* scenes. There is the same emphasis on physical contact and participation with the suffering of Christ.

Mary in Bernardine Images

By far the most popular and widespread of the four "scene-attributes" of Bernard was that of the Virgin offering Bernard milk from her bared breast, the so-called *Lactatio Bernardi* or *Lactation*. There is no version of the story in any of the early *Vitae*, in the extensive Cistercian *exemplum* literature, in the *Legenda Aurea*; nor, unlike the *Amplexus*, is it found in the *Exordium magnum*. Although the earliest known examples are pictorial representations, these would only have been understood by those who knew the story that lay behind them, and they most likely depended on a literary tradition. However, in a world which was still predominantly pre-literary, the possibility of an oral origin cannot be ruled out. Like the *Amplexus*, the dissemination of *Lactation* images was at first slow and then there was a veritable escalation, especially in the final decades of the Middle Ages, and, also like the *Amplexus*, they appealed equally to monastic and lay audiences.

Suckling, the most basic and intimate of all physical acts, had long been represented in art, first of all in images of *Maria lactans*—the Virgin nursing her Child. Stories of the Virgin offering her milk to others than her Son can be traced back to the 12th century. According to William of Malmesbury, the noted 11th-century theologian Fulbert of Chartres was cured when Mary offered him three drops of milk from her breast.[38] In the 12th century, stories of the healing power of Mary's milk became a widespread theme in collections of Marian miracle stories. A further development of the theme is found

[38] William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, trans. J.A. Giles (London, 1847; repr. New York, 1968), p. 314.

in a pseudo-Caesarian exemplum collection. This has the story of one of Bernard's successors, Henry of Clairvaux (1176–79), who is referred to as an "unlettered abbot who imbibed from the breast of the Blessed Virgin and was endowed with knowledge." He had been ordered by the pope to preach a crusade, a task beyond his powers. He therefore approached Mary who "gave him sweetly her most sacred breast that he might suck it…and he was made so skilful at the knowledge of letters that he received at Rome the dignity of a cardinal."[39]

The *Lactation* theme was soon attached to Bernard himself. William of Saint Thierry refers to the insistence of Bernard's mother on suckling her children herself,[40] and, according to the *Legenda Aurea*, "it was as if she hoped with her mother's milk to instil into her children something of her own goodness."[41]

The earliest known *image* of the Virgin offering Bernard milk from her breast is found in the retable from the church of the Templars in Palma, which, as mentioned above, was also the first Bernardine altarpiece. It is one of the four painted narrative scenes flanking the large central "portrait" of Bernard (Fig. 5, top left). Although not of Cistercian origin, like the next known example from Montblanch (SC41), an altarpiece carved in stone dated 1348, it was within the orbit of the wealthy Catalan abbey of Poblet. The Palma *Lactation* scene has the standing Virgin with a cross-nimbed Child on her right arm. She presses her bared breast with her left hand and a squirt of milk falls in a curved line into the mouth of the kneeling Bernard, whose head is raised and whose hands are clasped in prayer. Three angels, two of them holding candles, suggest the supernatural nature of the event. This is accentuated in the later Montblanch retable by the position of the Virgin and Child placed higher up on a corbel, which clearly represents a statue come alive, as well as by the hand of God appearing from above and blessing the scene.

There were a number of later *Lactation* images in Spanish retables, although mostly not belonging to altars dedicated to Bernard but as secondary scenes in Marian altarpieces. The first known *Lactation* of Cistercian ownership, which is also the first we know of in a manuscript, is found in a Cistercian Missal from the beginning of the 14th

---

[39] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, ed. Alfons Hilka, vol. 3 (Bonn, 1937), p. 164.

[40] VP 1.1.1; PL 185:227.

[41] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 209.

century belonging to the great Portuguese abbey of Alcobaça (MA084). Like the Palma *Lactation*, but otherwise most unusually, the Virgin is standing. With her right hand she holds the cross-nimbed Child, whose right hand is raised in blessing. With her left hand she squeezes her breast sending a jet of milk, only just visible, in the direction of the kneeling Bernard. With the exception of one other 14th-century image all other portrayals of the *Lactation* belong to the 15th century and later.

Three very different literary versions of the miracle appeared in the first half of the 14th century. The first is in a French *exemplum* collection entitled *Ci nous dit*, written between 1313 and 1330 and illustrated with four scenes including one of the *Lactation* (MA042).[42] Here Bernard's head is turned round and he is sucking the white breast of the standing and crowned Virgin, the greater physicality of which is reminiscent of the pre-Bernard version described in the Henry of Clairvaux *exemplum* and distinguishes it from all earlier and later examples in medieval art. No other similar images of the subject are known.

One of the other near-contemporary literary versions is found in a Norse collection called *Mariu Jartegnir* (Mary's Miracles).[43] Much of the material in this is taken from the *Vita prima*, but the source of the *Lactation* scene cannot be traced back, although it is likely to be an unidentified Latin text. It is unique in that Mary's milk was not needed either for its healing power or for its transmission of "science divine"—the power to preach—but to quench the thirst of Bernard who, in the heat of the sun, had left what little wine was left to his two travel companions. Like the French *exemplum* example, this Nordic literary version did not find its way into the later rich *Lactation* iconography.

The third literary version, although based on a much later transcription of an earlier document, refers to the reverence accorded to a statue of the Virgin in the church of Saint Vorles at Châtillon-sur-Seine, the scene of Bernard's childhood vision of the Nativity.[44] Bernard was kneeling by the statue of Mary, meditating on the Marian hymn *Ave maris stella* ("Hail, star of the sea"). When he came to the fourth verse which begins *Monstra te esse matrem* ("Show us that you

[42] For this, see J. Berlioz. "La Lactation de Saint Bernard dans un *Exemplum* et une miniature du *Ci nous dit*," *Cîteaux* 39 (1988), 270–283.
[43] McGuire, *The Difficult Saint* (note 3 above), pp. 204–216.
[44] VP 1.2.4; PL 185:229.

are our mother"), the image miraculously came alive, and Mary placed three drops of milk into Bernard's mouth. The three drops, a symbol of the Trinity, became represented by three jets of milk in a number of cases, and *Monstra te esse matrem* became the standard inscription of *Lactation* images, usually found on a banderole emanating from Bernard's mouth.

The customary banderole may be seen in a small painted panel painted *c.*1478 by an artist sometimes known as the Lower Rhine Master (Fig. 8). A crowned Virgin holds the naked Child resting on a cushion lying on a sill in the forefront with her left hand, while placing her right hand on her bared breast. The half-figure of a youthful Bernard in a white cowl and with his crozier resting on his shoulder and his hands clasped in prayer kneels behind the sill. The scene is in a room with a window in the background through which is a landscape with a church. The panel was closely imitated in a metal engraving from Cologne dated 1480 (EN02).

This *Lactation* painting represents a large group equally remarkable for its homogeneity and its widespread dispersal throughout the part of Europe where the theme was most popular, the Low Countries and the Upper Rhineland. A number of small painted panels of almost identical composition, sometimes showing the donor, were intended for the private devotional use of their owners. These formed the prototypes for a number of subsequent examples, either as miniatures in manuscripts like Books of Hours or as woodcuts, used either as frontispieces for printed books or as single devotional images or *Andachtsbilder*. These, in turn, might serve as models for later *Lactation* panels.

An example of this type is a woodcut illustrating a book of Bernard's Sermons printed by Pieter van Os in Zwolle in 1484 (Fig. 9). It is almost identical to the panel by the Lower Rhine Master except that the figures of the Virgin and Bernard are reversed. Through a square window we look into a chamber in which Bernard stands facing the Virgin who presses her breast, sending a jet of milk, indicated by a series of dots, towards Bernard. The Child stands on a cushion on a sill at the front, supported by the Virgin with her right hand. Behind Mary is a piece of tapestry and behind Bernard we see through two round arches to a landscape with a tower. The traditional inscription is in the centre of the picture between the heads of the Virgin and Bernard. A scroll held by the Child also has the Virgin's response *ecce Bernarde* ("Behold Bernard") in an abbreviated form (*ecce ber.*).



Fig. 8 A *Lactation* panel painted by the Lower Rhine Master *c.* 1478. Photo: Collection Steinmetz.

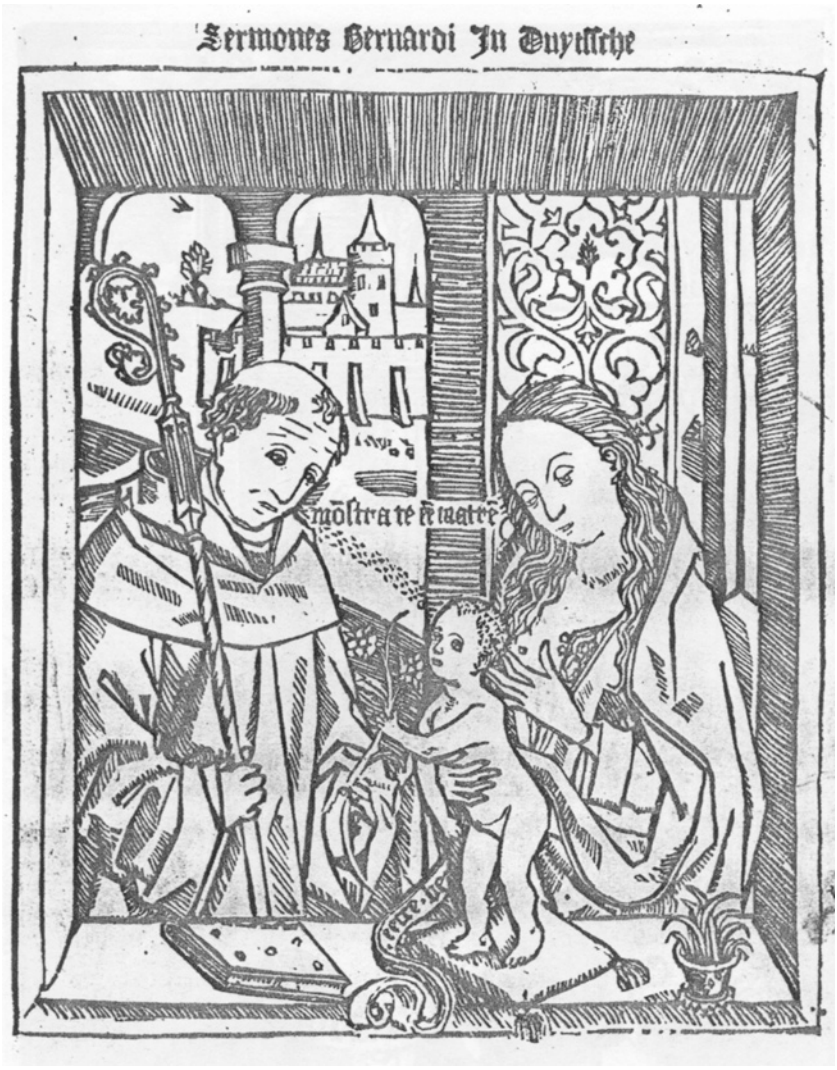


Fig. 9 *Lactation* image in a woodcut illustrating Bernard's Sermons printed by Pieter van Os in Zwolle 1484.

Another group of *Lactatio Bernardi* images consists of visual aids to communal acts of worship in the form of altarpieces in Cistercian churches. Among these the theme is sometimes found painted in grisaille on the reverse of the wings of large triptychs. These would have been seen when the altarpiece was closed, in other words most of the time, since they were only opened on special occasions.

Like the painted panels, altarpiece *Lactatio* images as well as all other representations of the theme were confined to the Iberian peninsula and northwestern Europe. They are not known in Britain, Scandinavia, or in eastern Europe, and they are only very rare in Italy, where Bernard's intensely personal devotion to Mary found expression in an iconographical theme known as the *Doctrina* or *The Vision of Mary*. This third "scene-attribute" is similar to the *Lactatio* in that the knowledge to write and preach is transmitted to Bernard, although the physical nurture is replaced by the intellectual sustenance received by Bernard, who is depicted receiving a visit or vision of the Virgin as he is sitting at a desk writing. The cult of Bernard was particularly strong in Florence. It contributed to Dante's choice of Bernard to replace his beloved Beatrice on the final part of his journey, described in the last three cantos of *Paradiso.*

The surge in the number of Marian images of Bernard, both *Lactatio* and *Doctrina*, in the last century of the Middle Ages may be attributed to his perceived association with the Virgin, whose cult enjoyed a rapid rise during this period, much in the same way that *Amplexus* images peaked with the growth of popularity of Passion images in the final decades of the Middle Ages. Both were marked by a greater physicality. The earlier stiffness and formality gave way to a tenderness in *Lactation* images in the same way that a greater intimacy and realism distinguished late medieval *Amplexus* images from earlier ones.

Bernard's Ascendancy Over the Devil

Stories of encounters with the devil, in which he is invariably portrayed as the loser, were all-pervasive in medieval hagiography, and it comes as no surprise that demonic onslaughts on the saintly abbot of Clairvaux found their way into his *vitae* and later gave rise to one of the most widespread themes associated with his iconography.

Such encounters are recorded in the *Vita prima*, in *exemplum* literature, and in the *Exordium magnum*, in which the devil is time and again held responsible for the misfortunes of monks and lay brothers. Bernard's ability to cure those possessed by the devil was the subject of numerous stories. The earliest pictorial representation of one of these exorcisms appears on the Palma altarpiece, which, as we have seen, was also the first retable featuring Bernard as well as the first with a *Lactatio* image. One of the four cycle scenes probably refers to the story in which two women from Bar-sur-Aube were said to be possessed by two devils.[45] It shows two ladies kneeling before Bernard, who frees them from their demonic possession, indicated by the fire and smoke emanating from their mouths (see Fig. 5, bottom right). Bernard stands on the right with the hood of his white cowl partially over his head. His right hand is raised in blessing the women. The scene is witnessed by five men and women standing behind the kneeling women. A building in the background suggests an urban scene.

With only a few exceptions, the Bernard/devil theme did not enter into the iconography of Bernard until the first half of the 15th century, and then only in a form which cannot be directly attributed to any specific literary source. The motif, therefore, only refers in a general way to Bernard's triumph over the devil. The form it usually took was to show him standing, carrying his crozier and sometimes also a book, and either holding a smaller figure of the devil on a leash or a chain or else trampling on the devil lying on the ground, or, most often, a combination of the two. As devils usually appeared in the guise of some animal in medieval *exemplum* stories and in art, those depicted with Bernard were usually composite creatures with features drawn from a variety of beasts: the beaks and claws of birds, the wings of bats, hooves, tails, hairy bodies, goats' beards and horns, and antlers (see Fig. 10). More than any of the other topoi, the Bernard/devil theme was the "scene-attribute" *par excellence* in that the main purpose of adding the devil on a chain was as a means of easy identification. That is how the motif appears in the famous Erasmus altarpiece by Dieric Bouts in the Sint Pieterskerk in Louvain (PA006), in a marble statue in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (SC11), and in stained glass in the Certosa in Pavia dated 1477 (GL70).

---

[45] *Vita quarta* 2.15; PL 185:548.

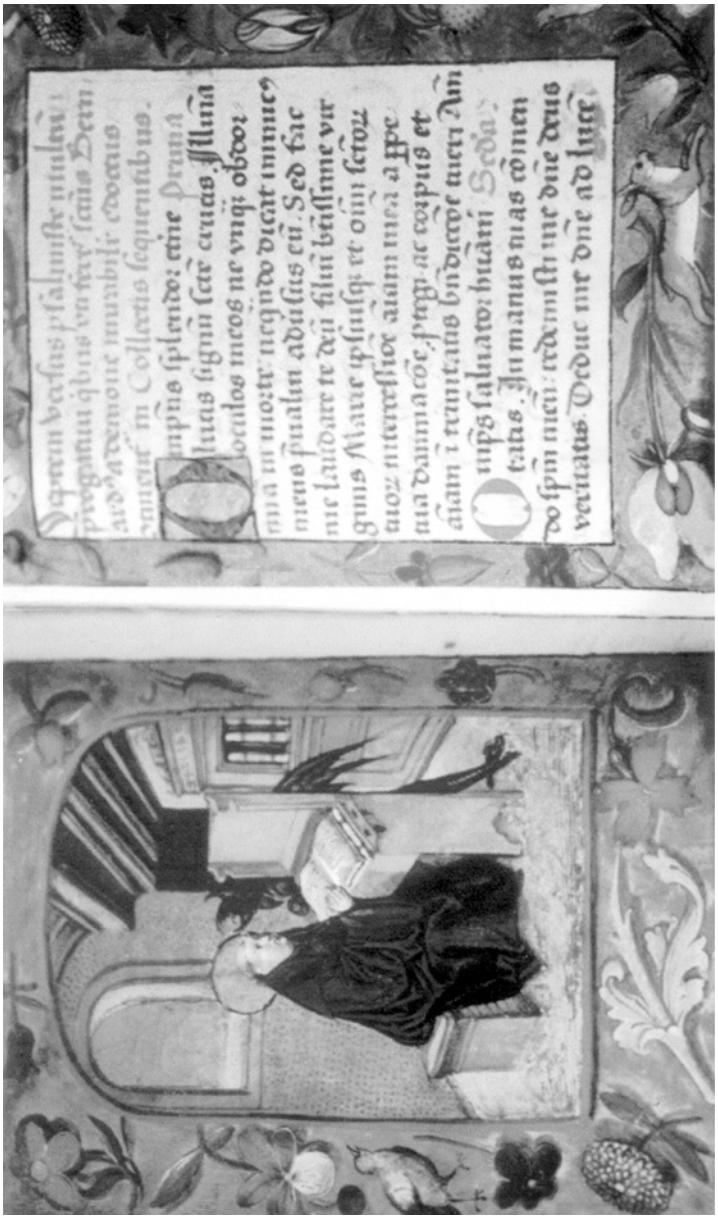


Fig. 10 Bernard and the devil in a sixteenth-century German Prayerbook illustration of the *Seven Verses of Bernard*. Private Collection. Photo: Tessa France.

The devil theme, however, is most commonly found in Books of Hours, first in manuscript illumination and then, following the invention of printing, as woodcuts in printed editions. As the most popular and widely distributed of all books, and the first to be aimed at an increasingly lay audience, Books of Hours were to have a considerable influence on late medieval religious devotion. Many of them are among the greatest medieval works of art, not always matched by the quality of the text. In the words of the great authority, the Abbé Leroquais, they were "at one and the same time very rich and very poor: very rich as regards decoration of the manuscripts, very poor as regards the text itself,"[46] a description most apt as regards the pictorial use of the Bernard/devil theme in the so-called *Verses of Bernard*.

In the 15th century a number of supplementary prayers such as the Fifteen Joys of the Virgin and the Mass of Saint Gregory, were sometimes added to the Book of Hours. Among them was the *Verses of Bernard*, whose origin is not known but is based on a humorous legend which is sometimes included in the introduction to them. According to this the devil had once told Bernard that he knew the seven (sometimes eight) verses in the psalms which would ensure the salvation of anyone who recited them daily, but he would of course not divulge which they were. Bernard retorted that he knew how to say the verses, namely by daily reciting the whole Psalter, whereupon the devil relented and divulged which they were.

In some manuscripts the *Verses* have been graphically introduced by a miniature depicting the legend in a more faithful way than the standard devil-on-a-chain image. A German Prayerbook dated 1508 shows a nimbed Bernard sitting on a stool at a desk upon which is a book—the Psalter—from which he is reading (Fig. 10). He is wearing a black cowl, which was not uncommon in late medieval German portrayals. Hiding behind the desk is a black demon of almost the same size who is peering round to interrupt Bernard. The text on the opposite folio is that of the *Seven Verses*, introduced in red ink as follows: "The Seven Verses of the psalmist much favoured which Saint Bernard was accustomed to use and which the devil had wonderfully selected from the following collection."

---

[46] V. Leroquais, *Les Livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 2 vols (Paris, 1927), 1:1.

The *Verses* were already denounced in 1382 by Bishop Gerhard von den Berg of Hildesheim specifically for the indulgences attached to them, then criticised by Erasmus who ridiculed the *magicos versiculos* ("magical versicles") as "happy delusions" and attacked by Martin Luther, who referred to them as "this error…concerning the eight verses of the whole psalter as revealed to saint Bernard by the devil." The *Verses* savour more of late medieval lay devotional taste than of monastic spirituality and, significantly, unlike the other scene-attributes, are not found in a single manuscript of Cistercian origin or ownership.

Illustrations of the *Verses* legend and all portrayals of the Bernard/devil theme represent the most extreme deviation from Cistercian spirituality. They tell us less about who Bernard was than whom the artists and their patrons wanted him to be. While visual expressions of devotion to Bernard remained constant in a monastic context throughout the Middle Ages, especially in liturgical art and in illustrations of Bernard's own works, the late 15th and early 16th centuries saw a transition whereby Bernard became a popular saint available for all Christians. His iconography was constantly evolving and being adapted to a changing world.

Bernardine Images Reflecting Symptoms of Change

In the same way that the perception of Saint Bernard changed and developed in the course of the Middle Ages from his day until the 16th century, a number of departures from the early Cistercian ethos of austerity and restraint may be detected in the way he was portrayed. Hard work and efficiency had led to a degree of material success not envisaged by the founding fathers, and this expressed itself in a variety of ways: among them the building of enormous churches and the emergence of the abbot as a *grand seigneur*. As is so often the case, the way Bernard is portrayed reveals little about him but tells us a great deal about the changing Cistercian world as well as the wider Church.

A wonderfully inaccurate and idealized miniature in a late 15th-century Burgundy Chronicle shows the entry in procession of Bernard and his companions to Clairvaux on 15 June 1115 (MA092). Behind a nimbed Bernard carrying a gold crozier and an absurdly large group of monks, all in white tunics and black scapulars with gold borders, is an enormous edifice. It is reminiscent of the church that was finally

built there, the so-called Clairvaux III, or, with its four huge towers, perhaps even more of the sumptuous church at Cluny, the type of building Bernard had himself virulently attacked in his famous *Apologia.* In fact, the church has been identified as having been modelled on that of Saint Servaas in Maastricht.[47] It is a far cry from the modest wooden buildings Bernard and his small group of monks would have encountered when they first arrived at Clairvaux.

Relaxation of the early austerity and simplicity also showed itself as regards dress and attributes. According to the *Exordium parvum*, the monks who came from Molesme rejected "whatever offended against that [Saint Benedict's] Rule: namely coats, fur garments, linen shirts, hoods, too, and drawers."[48] Bernard himself devoted a whole chapter in his *Apologia* to "On Costly and Ostentatious Clothing."[49] Here he complained that "today's religious is less concerned with keeping out the cold than with cutting a good figure," and he described "soft clothing as a sign of moral flabbiness." In all early images Bernard is portrayed in the simple one-piece white or grey cowl with tight sleeves. That is how he and Aelred are depicted in the manuscript of *The Mirror of Charity* (see Fig. 2). The Cistercian habit was to undergo a development similar to that which had taken place among Benedictines before the Cistercian reform and against which the strictures of Bernard had been directed. The simple cowl was replaced by a two-piece garment with separate cape and hood with capacious, wide sleeves in the Cluniac style. That is how Bernard is increasingly depicted and how he is seen in all images from the 15th century onwards (see Fig. 8).

A similar development may be seen as regards the abbatial staff or crozier, with which abbots were invested by the bishop at their blessing and which was the emblem *par excellence* of their authority. Symbolizing the pastoral nature of the office, the abbot's staff was at first a simple wooden shepherd's crook. By the mid-12th century a plain spherical knob was added between the curved crook-head and straight staff. This is how the crozier is depicted in all early images of Bernard such as the earliest depiction in the *Vita prima* (see Fig. 3) and in the Anchin manuscript of Aelred's *The Mirror of Charity* (see Fig. 2).

---

[47] T.N. Kinder, "Les églises médiévales de Clairvaux," in *Histoire de Clairvaux—Actes du Colloque de 1990* (Clairvaux, 1990). 204-29, at p. 206. Translation from Pauline Matarasso, *The Cistercian World* (note 14 above), pp. 53–54.

[48] Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts* (note 29 above), p. 434.

[49] *De vestitu superfluo vel superbo*, in SBO 3, pp. 101–102.

A later development was the appearance of a simple foliate ending on the crook followed by the crook terminating in two trefoils and with the addition of crockets on the outside of the crook (see Fig. 6). In the final design of the crozier, with which Bernard is depicted in most late medieval images, a more extravagant decoration of the crook was combined with an elongated section between this and the staff, usually richly decorated and of architectural design and made in silver or gold and encrusted with precious stones (see Fig. 8). This, almost more than anything, symbolized the transformation of the abbatial office from the original concept of a shepherd to that of a powerful prelate.

The departure from the early ethos of simplicity which showed itself in the development of the habit and the crozier was later marked by abbots assuming outward signs of a status equivalent to that of bishops. Having assumed a place in society as important landlords, it was inevitable that they should have emerged as the social equals of their episcopal counterparts. They had gradually come to enjoy exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, a privilege fiercely opposed by Bernard, who had warned against "the temptation with which the devil assails men in religious life; to covet the fame of a bishop's status."[50] It is therefore ironic that, only a few years after the first papal grants of *pontificalia* whereby abbots were given the right to use a number of episcopal *insignia* and vestments, notably the mitre, Bernard was depicted in a French manuscript of the *Golden Legend* as the prelate he was now considered to be (MA161). Here he is shown wearing a grey cowl and a white mitre with blue decoration against a golden halo, preaching from a raised wooden pulpit to a group of at least a dozen monks, all with their hoods over their heads. It is a curious image, for the artist shows a lack of familiarity with monastic custom, for the mitre formed part of the liturgical vestments and would not have been worn with the cowl.

This anomaly indicates that the manuscript had its origin in a lay workshop and not a Cistercian scriptorium. Although there are not many images of Bernard wearing a mitre, the mitre was often included in late medieval woodcut representations of the *Amplexus*, but then only lying on the ground and sometimes surmounting the arms of Clairvaux, a further sign of the abbot's status. In a small number of images Bernard is depicted with five mitres, but these carry a totally

[50] SBO 1, p. 66.

different meaning. They refer to the story in the *Vita prima* of the five occasions on which Bernard was offered but refused bishoprics, namely those of Genoa, Châlons, Milan, Langres, and Reims.[51] That explains the significance of the five mitres at the foot of the cross in an *Amplexus* scene from the inside wing of a triptych dated *c.*1500, which may have come from the German abbey of Heisterbach (PA020).

The image of the distant figure of the mitred Bernard standing high up in a raised pulpit in the *Golden Legend* manuscript is indicative of the development there had been in the relationship between abbots and their communities. A gradual estrangement was inevitable from the time when the abbot ate and lived with his monks, to the later period when he had his own quarters and his own household where he was able to entertain his social equals in a style similar to that to which they were accustomed. At the same time there is a distinct development from the earliest images in the perception of Bernard as teacher. At first there was an informality which characterized the intimate relationship between teacher and pupil. This accorded with Saint Benedict's view of the way that the abbot should rule: "with a twofold teaching, displaying all goodness and holiness by deeds and by words, but by deeds rather than by words."[52] We have already seen it in a number of 13th-century images of Bernard in the company of monks and nuns within the initial *P* celebrating his feast (for example MA035 and MA423). The scenes of Bernard addressing nuns are not historical, for there is no evidence that he ever preached to nuns, but they are a tribute to the enormous debt the nuns owed to his spiritual teaching.

Another example of Bernard's role as a teacher comes from a Lectionary from Marienstern in Saxony from *c.*1280 (MA068). Within the upper part of the initial *A* a nimbed Bernard is pointing to the text in an open book which he holds in his left hand. Below, a group of six tonsured monks are seated on the floor, participating in a variety of ways: three of them are looking up and concentrating on what Bernard is saying; on the left one of them is writing in a book; on the right another, with his hood up, is writing on a long scroll; and in the middle, between the two writing monks, a sixth monk is assisting them by holding an inkwell in one hand and a knife, with which to make corrections and sharpen their pens, in the other.

---

[51] VP 1.14.69; PL 185:265.
[52] *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 6.

The same informality which characterizes the teaching scene in the Marienstern Lectionary is found again in a somewhat later manuscript: the so-called Hedwig Codex, that is a life cycle of Saint Hedwig of Silesia, which was completed in 1352. It contains 61 illustrations including a number which decorate the Sermons of Saint Bernard. One folio has two scenes: above, Bernard is depicted as a writer, and below, he is depicted as a teacher (Fig. 11). The artist's choice of depicting the two together affirms his appreciation that the two roles are inextricably linked, a feature apparent in much of the iconography of Bernard. Above, a tonsured and nimbed Bernard in a brownish habit is depicted writing at an adjustable desk against which his crozier is leaning. The inscription in red ink reads: "Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, is writing a sermon on the gospel passage *An Angel is sent*," referring to the opening words of his Homily One, *In Praise of the Virgin Mother—Missus est angelus Gabriel*.[53] Below, again nimbed and with a crozier under one arm, Bernard is seated surrounded by a group of five monks squatting on the floor whom he is addressing. He is pointing to an open book which he is holding in his left hand. Two of the monks have their hoods partially over their heads. One is pointing to Bernard indicating his attention and approval, while another is looking up at him attentively. The inscription describes the scene: "Here he reads the homily to his most beloved brethren."

The intimacy of these scenes of Bernard introducing young recruits to the monastic life is in sharp contrast to the way he is portrayed in the formal setting of the more rigid learning associated with the later *studia.* Here Bernard is shown as the master engaged in the question-and-answer method of scholastic disputations then fashionable in the schools. In a manuscript of the *Mirror of History* by Vincent of Beauvais dated 1455, Bernard is depicted raised up on a dais in a schoolroom, sitting on a high-backed chair while lecturing to his students who are seated on benches below in formal serried rows (MA197). The medieval artist has depicted the way theology was taught in the schools in the 15th century as representing the monastic formation during the abbacy of Bernard in 12th-century Clairvaux.

A similar development may be seen in the way Bernard was perceived as a writer. In the earliest manuscripts he is depicted in traditional author "portraits" sitting at a desk writing (see Fig. 1). By

[53] SBO 4, p. 13.



Fig. 11 Bernard the writer and the teacher in the Hedwig Codex illustrating Bernard's Sermons. Malibu, California, The J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig XI 7 (83 MN 126), f. 167r.

contrast, in late medieval manuscripts he is sometimes presented as the learned scholar-author, sitting in a Gothic chamber surrounded by his books, in much the same way as a Renaissance figure like Erasmus might have been depicted. This is how he appears in another image in the same manuscript of the *Mirror of History* as referred to above (MA196). A nimbed Bernard in a white cowl is seated in a high-backed chair writing on a roll of parchment which he holds in his left hand. An inkwell and an open book lie on the table, and two more books and a piece of parchment lie on a shelf on the wall.

The change from the informality of earlier images to the formality of later ones may also be detected in the difference between the way two artists, one in the 13th century and one two centuries later, have chosen to treat the identical subject, namely, the dedicatory image of Bernard handing Eugene III a copy of his treatise *De consideratione*. Both are remarkable in that they contain more images of Bernard than any other manuscript. In both he is represented in historiated initials to the Preface and to Books 2 to 5, a work highly critical of the Roman Curia which he addressed to the pope, one of his former disciples. In both manuscripts the first miniature has Bernard and the pope depicted within the opening initial of the Preface *S(ubit animum dictare aliquid…)*: "It has occurred to me to write something which might edify, delight, or console you, Blessed Father Eugene."[54] Although in each case the red letters above announce the beginning of the first book, the text is in fact that of the Preface.

What is of particular interest is the marked difference in the way the same scene is treated in the two manuscripts. The origin of the earlier one, dated to the third quarter of the 13th century, is not known, but it was presented to the Franciscans in York (MA283). A bearded Bernard in a white cowl is seated, facing the pope who is also seated. He hands a long piece of parchment containing the text of his treatise to the pope with his right hand while pointing to him with his left. The pope is wearing a chasuble and the primitive conical headgear worn by popes before the tiara was used. The later manuscript was commissioned by Pope Nicholas V in 1452 (MA234). Within the opening initial a nimbed Bernard in a white cowl kneels and hands a red book to Eugene, who is seated facing him dressed in a red cope with gold edging and wearing a golden tiara. He takes the book with his left

[54] SBO 3, p. 393.

hand while blessing Bernard with his right. While the two were alone in the earlier scene, here it is witnessed by a number of tonsured clerics against a gold ground.

In the earlier English manuscript, Bernard is shown presenting his treatise to the pope much as in the early image of him handing his letter to Aelred of Rievaulx (see Fig. 2). The simple dialogue of the two figures facing each other on the same level in a relaxed atmosphere suggests a meeting of near-equals, reflecting Bernard's emphasis on stewardship rather than supremacy in the exercise of the papal office. Bernard was not challenging the pope's *plenitudo potestatis* ("plenitude of power"), but nevertheless the initiative is clearly with him. The later Italian scene of a formal encounter between a magnificently attired pope and the submissive kneeling figure of one of his subservient subjects presents a very different picture of papal authority.

Bernard in the visual arts has much to say about the evolution of the Cistercian Order and the wider medieval Church as the centuries unfurled. However, this change is eclipsed by the greater knowledge of the saint through the stories in the *Golden Legend*, by the dissemination of his works, and by the rise of pseudo-Bernard texts. In the same way, the profusion of portrayals in the different media made him accessible to an ever-wider public. By far the most widespread Bernardine themes, the *Lactatio* and the *Amplexus*, further stimulated popular devotion to the saint. They resonated with late medieval lay spirituality and were responsible for devotion to Bernard spreading to the lay population at large in a way that would otherwise not have occurred. These medieval motifs may appear to us as erotic or macabre and perhaps even repulsive, but medieval people, for whom the borderline between the sacred and the profane was blurred, were able to take them in their stride. As expressed in the chief Bernardine image types, the physical led to the spiritual in true incarnational fashion. Bernard is depicted as witness of the suffering of Christ on the Cross and the exemplar of Marian devotion.

AN OLD MAN'S TALE: MY MANY YEARS WITH SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Chrysogonus Waddell, ocso

I am now—much to my bemused astonishment—an old man. If I cannot say with Yevgeny Yevtushenko that "My life has often been by backward glances," I can say at least that "My life has *sometimes* been by backward glances." The present is too filled with happy but serious and busy reality for me to indulge in much backward glancing, especially when the best is yet to come. I fell in love with Yevtushenko's *Zima Junction* at first reading—the poem where he celebrates his return to his boyhood home, where he found "new strength, touching the same ground / where you first moved bare-footed, kicking up dust."[1] I am now about to return, bare-footed, to my own Zima Junction, the Trappist-Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, and begin kicking up a bit of dust.

In the present effort, written at the urging of my dear friend of many years, Brian Patrick McGuire, I shall be largely looking backward at my long life with Saint Bernard. About Saint Bernard I have absolutely nothing scholarly to contribute. I just want to talk about the Saint Bernard I came to know a bit and to love much after I had entered the Abbey of Gethsemani back in 1950.

Please note that I write *Saint* Bernard advisedly. Intimacy with Saint Bernard has never meant for me casual informality or familiarity. For myself, I generally foreswear a "Bernard this, Bernard that" approach. The more I know and love him, the more my reverence for him grows. But please don't get me wrong. Life in my monastery has been, apart from a few periods of real anguish, a happy, carefree, yet serious sort of existence. I am living at the heart of my admittedly somewhat dysfunctional family, with Saint Bernard playing the role of, say, a remarkable uncle: a brilliant virtuoso conductor of great profundity, or a titan among composers, or a master of the spoken and written

[1] Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "Zima Junction," in his *Selected Poems*, trans. Rovin Milner-Gulland and Peter Levi (Baltimore, 1962), p. 19.

word. "Awesome" is the current buzz-word. For me, Saint Bernard has been awesome. It's true, of course, that he has his mood swings—sometimes violent mood swings—and it's sometimes difficult to tell when he's being merely inconsistent and when he's really contradicted himself.

It was at mid-morning on 2 August 1950 that the Guest Master, Fr Francis, escorted me to the door of the novitiate, where I was greeted by the Novice Master, Fr Urban. My first contact with Saint Bernard came not much later, at my first noonday meal with the community. The refectory reading was from Fr Ailbe Luddy's translation of Saint Bernard's sermons of *The Song of Songs*. I understood hardly a word. At Vespers that afternoon there was a further contact with the abbot of Clairvaux, though fleeting and superficial. In those days we sang a series of commemorations after Lauds and Vespers—first a commemoration of Our Lady, then a commemoration of Saint Joseph, followed by a commemoration of Saints Benedict, Bernard, and Robert, and then by suffrages for peace. I was already somewhat acquainted with Saint Benedict; Saint Bernard I knew only slightly, very slightly, from reading Thomas Merton; and Saint Robert I knew not at all. Already, however, it was beginning to dawn on me that this Saint Bernard was someone important, someone I should come to know. This was confirmed barely two weeks later.

On 15 August we celebrated, and celebrated sumptuously, the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven. Such liturgical splendour I had never seen before: the priests of the community meeting Dom James at his office door, and then escorting him, to the ringing of all our bells, into the abbey church arrayed in his dazzling white *cappa magna*, with two lay brother novices holding up his long train; Dom James praying briefly before the altar of Our Lady of Victories; Terce celebrated while the sanctuary teemed with acolytes and candle bearers, a *bugia* bearer, and even a *gremial* bearer; and then the Mass, chanted with so much love and enthusiasm. This festivity had earlier carried over even into breakfast. Instead of the usual few slices of whole wheat bread, each of us found at his place a large bun topped with icing.

What was my amazement, then, when a scant five days later, on the solemnity of Saint Bernard, 20 August, the Office and Mass were celebrated in the same extravagantly festive mode as for the Assumption—even down to the breakfast rolls with icing. Later I was to learn that these buns were reserved for only the greatest solemnities: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption of Our Lady—and our father Saint Bernard.

I also had a further monthly liturgical reminder of Saint Bernard, when, during most seasons of the year, a Votive Office and Mass of Saint Bernard were celebrated on the first free Thursday of the month. The proper collect was a bit of a problem for me—but more about this later. Clearly, Saint Bernard meant something for us Trappist-Cistercians, and it behooved me to find out what and why.

This meant reading Saint Bernard, and here I was pretty much at a loss. There was, of course, the wonderful study by Etienne Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard*, but I sadly lacked the theological and monastic background needed to cope with a book I now find beautifully structured, balanced, and crystal clear in expression (though I'm still uncomfortable when it comes to Saint Bernard on grace and free-will). Next, I tried to tackle Saint Bernard himself. Though I loved Latin, and had done well enough with Cicero and Virgil in high school, I knew that I wasn't up to reading Saint Bernard with any degree of ease and comprehension. So I turned to the translations by Fr Ailbe Luddy—practically the only English translations of Saint Bernard then available, apart from a few of the letters and occasional odds and ends. Fr Luddy provided us with three volumes of the sermons and two volumes of Saint Bernard on *The Song of Songs*. My problem soon proved to be not so much Fr Luddy's somewhat flowery language and Edwardian diction as it was with myself. I simply hadn't the biblical and liturgical and patristic culture needed to be comfortable with Saint Bernard's mode of expression. I wanted to get at *what* he was saying; but I was bogging down with *how* he was saying it. I was simply floundering around. And, thank God, I persisted in my floundering. Because, little by little, Saint Bernard began making a bit of sense for me.

In point of fact, even now when I'm asked how to begin reading Saint Bernard, I usually say something like this: Dive in somewhere and flounder around a bit; and, with perseverance, you just might latch onto a bit of driftwood that will carry you by degrees to *terra firma*; and then the great adventure with Saint Bernard can begin. However, I'd never recommend Saint Bernard for any and all. A bad experience with Saint Bernard or any of the other Cistercian Fathers (or ecclesiastical writers in general) can put one off permanently.

In fact, that's what happened to me in the case of my now-beloved Saint Ælred of Rievaulx. C.H. Talbot's critical edition of his *De anima* had just appeared in 1952, but without English translation.[2] A book

[2] The Warburg Institute: University of London, 1952.

on Cistercian anthropology! How exciting! But, once again, I totally lacked the basic philosophical background needed to appreciate Saint Ælred's densely argued presentation. How Saint Ælred's understanding of the faculties of the soul lined up with Saint Augustine's did nothing for my spiritual life. If this is Cistercian anthropology, I concluded (all too soon), *Libera me, Domine*. I swore off Saint Ælred for years, much to my loss and present regret. I would not want this to happen to anyone unprepared for an Isaac of Stella, a Blessed Guerric of Igny, a Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. After all, salvation is possible even for a Cistercian without a particular attraction to the abbot of Clairvaux. What we most need for beginners, such as I was, is an experienced guide who knows and loves Saint Bernard from within, and who can communicate this love to others.

I found something of such an experienced guide in the person of Fr Louis (he will always be "Fr Louis" for me, rather than "Thomas Merton"). When I made simple profession, Fr Louis was the newly appointed Father Master of the junior monks (known as "scholastics"). We younger scholastics had only recently embarked upon our philosophical and theological studies in preparation for eventual ordination to the priesthood. I wasn't the only scholastic traumatized by our initiation into philosophy by a professor incapable even of deciphering the relatively simple text-book Latin. The definition of philosophy as the knowledge and love of all things through their ultimate causes had sent me up to cloud nine. With page two I found myself back on earth, bruised, battered, and bleeding. It was Fr Louis' Sunday afternoon conferences to us scholastics, as well as face-to-face encounters with him in spiritual direction, that helped steady my equilibrium to some degree. Fr Louis spoke about practically everything calculated to help us respond at depth to our calling to monastic life. I count those conferences among the chief blessings of my early years at Gethsemani.

But what helped me follow and interiorise much of what Fr Louis was saying was the monastic environment in which I lived. In this environment, Bernard and his fellow Cistercian authors began more and more to make sense.

I recall once seeing a documentary about contemporary monastic life in the Egyptian desert, where Paul of Thebes and Anthony and Pachomius had thrived. In the documentary there was an encounter with an old black-robed hermit sitting cross-legged at the door of his hermitage (I was somewhat surprised but pleased to note that he lived surrounded by a troupe of hungry hamsters). The old hermit had a

Bible on his knees. "You know," he said, "years ago I tried to read the Bible, but I couldn't really understand it. I read it first in French. Then I learned Greek to be able to read it; and then Coptic and Syriac; and I still couldn't understand it. And then I came *here.* And now I can understand it."

This is important. Our understanding of the early Cistercian writers is conditioned in part by the environment we create around ourselves. The more we are in vital continuity (adapted to modern conditions, of course) with the environment created by our first Cistercian Fathers, the better we can understand their writings—but also their architecture, their economy, their manner of celebrating the liturgy, their art. Change our Cistercian environment too much, and you affect for the worse our ability to come into vital contact with the early monks of the Order.

Listening to Fr Louis discourse, then, on Saint Bernard and other great monastic figures, and attempting to foster our own contact with them through their writings—all this made our life together more meaningful for ourselves, for our community, for the Church at large. We had come to a place where we could read the Bible and Saint Bernard.

What a wonderful year 1953 was! It marked the beginning of a torrent of translations and writings about the early Cistercians, a torrent which continues to run unabated to the present day. But it was also a great time for monastic publications in general. It was clear to me that the best literature *in re monastica, liturgica, biblica* and *patristica* was in French and German; so I plunged into the study of these two languages, largely with the help of translations of the Bible in French and German. The Jerusalem Bible had just begun appearing in periodic fascicles, and it was with an unmonastic impatience that I awaited the arrival of each fascicle. An increasing facility in French made it possible for me to begin reading some of the better 19th- and early 20th-century French translations of Saint Bernard and Bl. Guerric and other less important monastic authors.

1953 was the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Bernard in 1153. All our Cistercian houses were encouraged, of course, to celebrate this anniversary with special *éclat*. It was in this context that I suggested to Fr Louis that I play for the community the complete *Orgelbüchlein* of J.S. Bach. As I saw it (and still do), Bach had done with music what Bernard had done with his sermons *per annum*. It was all about drawing us deeper into the Mystery of Christ. Fr Louis wasn't very enthusiastic. My time, he kindly told me, would be better spent in

reading Saint Bernard—which I did with ever increasing gusto. At the community level, there was a pre-20th of August novena with the daily chanting of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. I presume there were special readings in the refectory and in chapter before Compline—but I really can't remember.

It was in this context that Fr Louis became involved in what I thought was a quite hilarious *gaffe*. A truly memorable collection of studies on Saint Bernard had been prepared for publication by the Historical Commission of the Order—a collection of studies which will remain invaluable for decades to come.[3] Fr Louis, by then a popular author in French translation, was asked to provide the Preface—which he did, and a beautiful preface it was.[4] Not long after he was asked to write a similar preface to an issue of the wonderful journal (long since defunct, alas) *Témoignages*. There was to be an entire issue devoted to Saint Bernard, *vir Ecclesiæ*. Fr Louis was more than agreeable to providing the preface. But then higher authority within the Order intervened, and, in a moment of some kind of psychosis, forbade him to provide the preface. Poor Fr Louis had to write an apologetic letter to the editor, in which he lamented the lack among American Cistercians of any real understanding of Saint Bernard. Just look at the Gethsemani scholastics! Indeed, of all the scholastics, there was only one young monk (and he was to leave not long after) who showed any real promise. The editor of *Témoignages* had his revenge. Not without what the French call *un brin de malice*, the editor published Fr Louis' letter in place of the requested preface. Now everyone would know that no one in the States really understood Saint Bernard. Not everyone thought the episode as hilarious as I did.

As a matter of fact, Fr Louis was soon to retract his words. In celebration of the 1953 anniversary, a number of his scholastics were asked to give to the community conferences on some special aspect of Saint Bernard. I recall that Frater Peter-Julian Eymard gave a conference on Saint Bernard and the Eucharist; Frater John Eudes dealt with Saint Bernard and truth; Frater Abraham spoke about Saint Bernard and love for Jesus. And I? I had to speak about Saint Bernard and music—about which I knew nothing. But Fr Louis came to my rescue. He had recently received a pre-publication copy of a doctoral disserta-

[3] *Bernard de Clairvaux*, Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux (Paris, 1953).
[4] "Saint Bernard, moine et apôtre," ibid., pp. vii–xv.

tion by a young Hungarian scholar then residing in exile in France, at the Abbey of Solesmes: Fr Soloutor Rodolphe Marosszéki (a name he mercifully anglicised when he came to the States: Fr Ralph March). The name of Fr Marosszéki's dissertation tells what it was about: *Les origines du chant cistercien, Recherches sur les réformes du plain-chant cistercien au XIIe siècle*.[5] "Follow Marosszéki," said Fr Louis. And so I did. The community managed to survive; and even I did. This marked my initiation into the field of Saint Bernard and the liturgy.

Fr Marosszéki's main thesis was the received wisdom of the day. The first-generation Cistercians, in quest of what was most authentic, had gone for their antiphonary and gradual to Metz, the great Carolingian centre for the diffusion of the Roman liturgy. Why did the Cistercians go to Metz? Because it was there, they believed, that they could find the chant most authentically "Gregorian." So they brought back to the New Monasteries the Metz chant, which had faithfully preserved, it was believed, the authentic chant such as we now call "standard," the chant to be found in the liturgical books of the Abbey of Solesmes. But there were sinister developments. In the 1140s, if not before, the story went, there was a nasty situation a-brewed thanks to a number of Cistercian university drop-outs with a flair for music theory They found the Metz-derived Cistercian chant awful, downright awful.

The problem, thought Fr Marosszéki and company, was that these learned clerics had been thoroughly corrupted by exposure at the universities to ideas mooted about by professional musicologists with a profound misunderstanding of the authentic chant tradition. Thanks to their indoctrination by egg-head musicologists, these Cistercians deemed corrupt what was actually the authentic plainsong tradition such as had been handed down at Metz. Therefore the Cistercians, under the aegis of Saint Bernard himself, rewrote the entire chant repertory brought from Metz, with a view to making it conform to the true nature of chant as determined by the musicologists who didn't know what they talking about—Pseudo-Odo of Cluny, Aurelian of Réomé, Guido of Arezzo, John Cotto, Bernon of Constance, and still others.

The reasons for the revision of the classical repertory were spelled out in a treatise introducing the reformed Cistercian antiphonary,

[5] First published in the journal *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cistercensis* 8 (1952) and then, the same year, as an off-print, Tipografia Poliglotta (Vatican), with proper pagination.

Cantum quem.[6] With all the other chant *cognoscenti*, I deplored this systematic mutilation of the Church's traditional plainsong; but I was also fascinated by the thinking that underlay this foolhardy enterprise. It had been dealt with earlier by the anonymous Cistercian author of a treatise, *Regulae de arte musica*.[7] Appealing to the classical image-likeness theme, the author concluded that, for various reasons, the entire chant tradition had degenerated, had lost its resemblance to the true nature of chant, and was now straying about in the *regio dissimilitudinis*. How to correct this lamentable state of affairs? Simply define the true nature of the chant, and then rewrite it so as to make it conform to its true nature. Obviously, we do not have revelation to define for us the true nature of plainsong; but we do have the theorists. So, under Saint Bernard's direction, the entire chant repertory of the Cistercians was reworked on the basis of an appeal to *reason*, pure *ratio.* All this I found rather Abelardian, and suggested as much: a return to the authentic by means of *reason* (actually, this is not Abelard at all).

It was only later that, after sleuthing around in the pitifully few extant remains of Metz chant, that I discovered that the much vaunted Metz tradition had indeed fallen upon hard times. Granted that it had once been a model of true "Gregorian" chant (*do, non concedo*), by the early 12th century it had degenerated into a miserable sort of Teutonic chant dialect. It was chock-full of mistakes and inconsistencies. Those university drop-outs were right in despising their Cistercian chant. But they did so not on the basis of their weird ideas about chant theory but because this strange Metz-derived plainsong was so unlike the chant we now consider "standard," the chant which, admittedly with local variations, was current throughout western Europe. So what was my amazement when, still later, I was able to recover large swatches of primitive Cistercian chant and compare it to the later "Bernardine" version, with all the mutilations made in the name of chant theory. Mutilations there certainly were. But by far the more numerous revisions simply brought the peculiar Metz chant dialect more into conformity with the standard tradition at large. Saint Bernard's pastoral sense

---

[6] The best edition (with English translation) is by Francis J. Guentner, *Epistola S. Bernardi de revisione cantus Cisterciensis et Tractatus Scriptus ab auctore incerto Cisterciense: Cantum quem Cisterciensis Ordinis Ecclesiae cantare consueverant*, Corpus Scriptorum de Musica, 24 (Rome, 1974).

[7] Brilliantly edited by Claire Maître, *La réforme cistercienne du plain-chant. Etude d'un traité théorique* (Brecht, 1995).

was exquisite. He knew how to make the primitive archaicising Cistercian liturgy more accessible to the ordinary 12th-century monk in the choir stall.[8]

I found exactly the same thing when I studied in detail the evolution of the Cistercian hymnary. Out of love for the *Rule of St Benedict*, which four times refers to hymns as *ambrosiana*, the first Cistercians adopted an exclusively Milanese repertory of hymns, most of which were unknown, texts and melody, outside the Milanese sphere of influence. This also meant abandoning much loved but non-Ambrosian hymns, such as *Vexilla regis prodeunt, Ave maris stella, Conditor alme siderum*. Under Saint Bernard's direction, the traditional hymns re-entered the Cistercian hymnal, since Saint Bernard shrewdly noted that, though Saint Benedict had referred to the hymns of vigils, lauds, and vespers as *ambrosiana*, he had elsewhere used the more general term *hymni*. But not only were the Milanese melodies revised; there were six or seven new melodies adopted, hymns of Cistercian composition. And glorious melodies they are![9]

Though the remains of the primitive Cistercian chant texts for Mass are much more slight (some 33 Masses in all), what emerges from them is the same. Continuity with tradition was maintained; yet chants of a later period were introduced, chants from the "silver" rather than the "golden" age of Western plainsong, but chants which, though more recent, were much beloved by the new generation of Cistercians. Saint Bernard was both a traditionalist and an innovator, and, in him, the two aspects were in perfect balance.[10] For me, Saint Bernard became a model of liturgical and monastic renewal: The old and the new brought together in perfect harmony and continuity.

But to return to Fr Louis—there was a period, all too brief, when, in addition to his Sunday afternoon conferences, Fr Louis gathered a group of us to read through some of the sermons of Saint Bernard. I'll always cherish the conference when we read part of Saint Bernard's fourth Assumption sermon, where Saint Bernard begins reflecting on

---

[8] All this I discussed in brief in "The Origin and Early Evolution of the Cistercian Antiphonary: Reflections on Two Cistercian Chant Reforms," in *The Cistercian Spirit*, ed. M. Basil Pennington, Cistercian Studies, 3 (Spencer, 1970), pp. 190–223.

[9] For a detailed study of the early and the later hymnal, see Chrysogonus Waddell, *The Twelfth-century Cistercian Hymnal*, vol. 1. Cistercian Liturgy, 1 (Trappist, Ky., 1984).

[10] I have studied the Cistercian Mass texts in *Two Early Cistercian "Libelli Missarum: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms 2300, ff. 85b–122v, Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale ms 310*, ff. 76r–97v, Cistercian Liturgy, 19 (Trappist, Ky., 1991).

Lazarus, the type of the sinner four days dead, bound in a tangle of burial bands, and stinking,. He pointed out how tangled Saint Bernard's Latin was in this section, reflecting something of Lazarus' condition; until we reached the section which turned into a hymn-like praise of Mary. The Latin now became beautiful and balanced, and a perfect vehicle for praise. Actually, I'm not sure that Saint Bernard's Latin is all that tangled at the beginning of this sermon; but this was the beginning of what became a considerable help for me in my reading of Saint Bernard. Every time he waxes eloquent or rhetorical or literary, he has something important to say.

For instance, there's one of my favourite sermons, the fourth sermon for Christmas. Saint Bernard begins on an epic mode of classical diction. I would swear that I was reading a Nativity kerygm by Saint Leo the Great. I can imagine the brethren of Clairvaux groaning, since at the Christmas Night Office they had already listened to two Saint Leo sermons in their entirety (to say nothing of three long sections from *Isaiah*, three complete sermons by Saint Maximus or Pseudo-Maximus, as well as four lengthy extracts from Saints Jerome, Gregory, and Bede). Then, of a sudden, when Bernard launches into what he really wants to talk about—the abjection and poverty of the newborn Infant—the language straightens out and becomes simple and limpidly crystalline. Indeed, passages abound where Saint Bernard's rhetoric is in the service of the theological content. Take, for instance, the wonderful line in Saint Bernard's first sermon for the kalends of November. It's a punch line, and the literary structure of the line calls attention to this fact:

> *Tu quoque, si desideras videre sublimem,*
> *humilem prius Iesum videre curato.*

The chiasmus *sublimem* / *humilem* is obvious; so also the repetition in parallel lines of *videre*; less obvious is the assonance between the first syllable, *Tu*, and the last, *-to*. This would have been less striking had Saint Bernard used the more standard imperative form, *curate*, since *Tu* / *-te* is less of an assonance than *Tu* / *-to*. Bernard is full of such devices. What Fr Louis once remarked about the early Cistercian authors is true: they said profound things in beautiful words. So, when I could, I began reading Saint Bernard aloud.

Having touched on this wonderful sermon for the kalends of November, I am put in mind of the time I had to give a conference in a patrology session at Western Michigan University, during the course

of one of the May Medieval Congresses. I gave an exegesis of this sermon. Afterwards, my dear friend, Rabbi Michael Signer (professor at Notre Dame University), came up to me and said: "Reb, I thought I was listening to an old rabbi." However, it was not I who was the old rabbi; it was Saint Bernard. I'm sure that Saint Bernard knew nothing whatsoever about rabbinic exegesis; but in entering into the stream of the traditional exegesis of the Fathers, he was linking up, perhaps by way of Origen, with something even more vast than the Christian patristic stream of exegesis.

Saint Bernard did much to teach me, too, to respect and love the nuances of every word. Why does he use one word rather than another? Is it because of its precise technical meaning? Is it because it works better than another word in the literary context? Is it because it has associations with Scripture, liturgy, and the Fathers? I don't think I know a writer more precise in his use of words than Saint Bernard, unless it's perhaps the most "Bernardine" of the four Cistercian evangelists, Bl. Guerric. My studies in liturgy and dogma during the early '60s at Sant' Anselmo in Rome helped confirm what I had already learned thanks to Saint Bernard. This love of words helped me to appreciate at their just value the texts of the liturgy, in which almost every term is fraught with meaning. Miss the nuances and you miss the meaning, or at least a large part. But what is true for liturgical Latin is also true for classical Latin. My reading of Bernard has carried over into my reading of Virgil and Horace and the Greek dramatists—and even to my reading of the Victorian novelists such as the Bronte sisters and Elizabeth Gaskell, whom I love. I'm not sure, however, that Saint Bernard would like this, but a fact's a fact.

But having touched on Rabbi Bernard, I want to say something about the thrill I felt when I first read Saint Bernard's Sermon 79 on the *Song of Songs*. The sermon was occasioned very likely by the terrible mayhem that was being inflicted on the Jews, principally in the Rhineland, where the certifiably mad pseudo-hermit Raoul (Rodolph) was stalking about stirring up, all too successfully, pogroms against the devastated Jews. The best way to launch the Crusade, he ranted, was to slaughter the Jews. But the Jewish chronicler Josuah Ben-Meier has said it far better than I ever could:

> "March towards Sion," Bernard told the Crusaders, "defend the sepulcher of Christ, but touch not the Hebrews. Speak to them with kindness, for they are of the flesh and bone of the Messiah: to harm them is to wound the Savior in the apple of his eye… Thus spoke this wise man, and his

> voice prevailed, because he was loved and revered by all. The multitude listened to his counsels and the fire of their anger cooled. The priest Bernard, however, received neither gold nor ransom from the Jews. It was his heart that led him to love them, and prompted him to speak good words for Israel.[11]

What a wonderful summing up this is! It was Saint Bernard's *heart* that led him to love the Jews. One can detect this in the background of Letter 365,[12] written in 1146 to Heinrich, archbishop of Mainz, where Raoul's activity had been particularly virulent. In a note prefacing his translation of this letter (Letter 393 in this edition), Bruno Scott James remarked: "Even to this day the Jews of that district have not forgotten the protection extended to their race by the saint, and in recognition of their gratitude they will sometimes call their sons Bernard."[13] So Bernard personally visited the very regions where poor mad Raoul had been most active: Freiburg, Strasburg, Spire, Mainz, Worms.

But to return to Sermon 79, Saint Bernard is discoursing on the *Song of Songs*, 3:4: "I held him, and would not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the bedchamber of her who bore me." It's the Bride, the Church, who is speaking; and the mother of the Bride is the Synagogue. Such is the love of the Bride that she wants for her Mother, the Synagogue, and wants this passionately, that she, the Synagogue, become Bride of Christ under the same title as herself. It is not just into the house of her Mother that the Bride wants to lead the Bridegroom, but into the very chamber which is "reserved for the delights of holy love. "Now if he enters this chamber," Saint Bernard tells us," it can only be as a Bridegroom." To speak of two Brides, however, is not really correct, because "they shall no longer be two, but one Spouse in Him. For He is our peace who hath made both one, so that there might be one Bride and one Bridegroom, Jesus Christ…"[14] For Bernard, the Church will not be wholly Church until the Synagogue

---

[11] As quoted in Ailbe Luddy, *Life and Teaching of St Bernard* (Dublin, 1937), p. 532. I regret that I have never been able to track down the source of this text, which Fr Luddy gives without providing a reference.

[12] *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77), Letter 365, 8:320–22 [abbreviated henceforth as SBO].

[13] Bruno Scott James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (Chicago, 1953), p. 465.

[14] For the Latin texts, see the whole of Section 2.4–6 of SBO 2, pp. 274–276, with the snippets of English translation excerpted from the translation by "A Priest of Mount Melleray" (= Fr Ailbe Luddy), *St Bernard's Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles* 2 (Dublin, 1920), pp. 440–443.

comes to give the Church her fullness and final perfection. Bede taught this, and Origen; but the ultimate source is, of course, the Saint Paul of the *Letter to the Romans*, Chapters 9–11.

This is not to suggest that Saint Bernard doesn't have his purple passages about the Jews; but Sermon 79 on the *Song* may be considered his final statement. For monks such as Saint Bernard and Bl. Guerric, the problem with the Jews was principally one of biblical exegesis. For Saint Bernard and Bl. Guerric, the Messianic passages of the Hebrew Scriptures pointed so patently to Christ that they simply couldn't face the possibility that these texts could admit of any other interpretation. Hence, the gentle Bl. Guerric's vitriolic lashing out at Jewish ingratitude, with Saint Bernard not far behind him.

In my room in the infirmary, a prayer shawl—a *tallit*—is draped behind my crucifix. Back in 1147, Saint Bernard would certainly not have approved. In his day, there were, in Cistercian monasteries, no paintings, no statues, no images of any kind, apart from the *corpus* on the wooden sanctuary cross which also served as the processional cross; and even here, the *corpus* had to be painted, not sculpted. But this is 2008, and Saint Bernard was one to appreciate the need for evolution, though always within the context of continuity. My crucifix and my *tallit* belong together. This is something Saint Bernard understands.

To return to Fr Louis. His first serious work with Saint Bernard appeared in a series of articles in the Order's periodical, *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum*, beginning in 1948. The title was fraught with meaning: "The Transforming Union in Saint Bernard and Saint John of the Cross."[15] It was clear that the author had steeped himself in that masterpiece by Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite; or, The Degrees of Knowledge*.[16] These studies, so important for understanding Fr Louis and the evolution of his thought, were too much for me to cope with. I simply didn't have the technical background to follow the thread of Fr Louis' densely reasoned presentation. Besides, I was no *San Juanist* (familiar with the writings of Saint John of the Cross)—a fact, given my inferiority complex, that I stupidly deplored for years.

---

[15] *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum* 10 (1948), 107 and 210; 11 (1949), 41 and 352; 12 (1950), 25. This series of articles was later collected and published, with the same title, in *Thomas Merton on St Bernard* (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 165–249.

[16] Fr Louis would have known it in the original French. It was later translated into English by G.B. Phelan (New York, 1959).

Another of Fr Louis' studies on Saint Bernard, which was likewise too much for me at that time, appeared the same year, 1948, perhaps a bit before the *Collectanea* articles. The General Chapter had requested the iconic abbot of Sept-Fons, Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard, to write a report on simplicity, the dominant characteristic of the Cistercian Order. Dom Chautard did his best; but the young monk, Fr Louis, was far from satisfied. Dom Chautard had limited himself to merely material expressions of Cistercian simplicity: simplicity in our architecture, simplicity in our liturgy, simplicity in our general style of life. So Fr Louis wrote an addendum almost as long as Dom Chautard's original report: "St Bernard on Interior Simplicity."[17] It consisted of texts by Saint Bernard with commentary by Fr Louis. It was a remarkable *tour de force* by so young a monk. But, once again, I simply wasn't prepared for it. Parts of it struck me, unreasonably, as being so many intellectual conundrums. I was very much in my affective stage of spirituality (not a bad stage to be in), and would have preferred a monograph on "St Bernard on Love of Jesus." But even now I have a certain reserve as to these two early contributions by Fr Louis: Saint John of the Cross and Saint Thomas Aquinas are not the best points of reference for reading Saint Bernard.

In 1953 and 1954 appeared in three instalments Fr Louis' "Action and Contemplation in St Bernard."[18] It began as a series of conferences to us scholastics. By this time I was better prepared to cope with Saint Bernard as understood and presented by Fr Louis. Still, the book (like the conferences) had less of an impact on me than should have been the case—chiefly because I wasn't particularly interested in what was for Fr Louis a matter of supreme importance. For Fr Louis, Trappist-Cistercian life had lost much of its contemplative dynamism and orientation; and he was labouring with might and main for us to recapture something of this contemplative dynamism and orientation. At the time, however, I was struggling to keep my head above quicksand in the quagmire of my studies for the priesthood. This was, for me, a matter of survival, and I was little inclined to ponder over Saint Bernard's

[17] It was published first together with Dom Chautard's report (in translation) in *The Spirit of Simplicity* (Trappist, Ky., 1948). It was later published in *Thomas Merton on St Bernard* (note 15 above), pp. 111–240.

[18] *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum* 15 (1953), 26 and 203; and 16 (1954), 105. It later appeared in French in an expanded version; but had to wait until 1980 to appear in English in book form, in the several times mentioned in *Thomas Merton on St Bernard* (note 15 above), pp. 21–104.

ideas about the rapport between action and contemplation. This I regret to this day.

But 1953's marking of the 800th anniversary of Saint Bernard's death brought joy to the heart of anyone with a love for the abbot of Clairvaux. Pope Pius XII issued a much neglected but powerful and insightful encyclical on Saint Bernard, *Doctor Mellifluus*[19]—ghost-written, at least in part, I was later assured, by the then-Abbot General of the Common Observance, Dom Sighard Kleiner. Fr Louis wrote a quite wonderful commentary on the encyclical, in a book published the following year, in 1954. Of course, his particular optic was, as usual, determined by his passion for whatever might contribute to our love for the specifically contemplative nature of the monastic life—for me, a quite admirable approach. Still. Fr Louis in no way lost sight of his main theme: how Saint Bernard helps us fulfil our baptismal vocation within the broad sweep of salvation history. We're really called to become saints. For Fr Louis there was no bogging down in particular matters whose importance was merely relative. One of the most precious features of his commentary on the encyclical, however, was his rapid survey of Saint Bernard's literary *oeuvre*. He went through the saint's writings and succinctly, but with marvellously penetrating insight, described the nature of each of Saint Bernard's contributions.[20] Though Fr Louis dismissed this volume as lightweight, it can well serve as a fine introduction to Saint Bernard. Unfortunately, like the encyclical, it is almost wholly neglected. As for the encyclical, Fr Louis had this to say: "I never saw anything so strong on the mystical life. It was a great inspiration to me…" And, I might add, to me. So Pius XII and Merton helped me draw still closer to Saint Bernard early on in my years at Gethsemani.

It was also about this time that Fr Louis helped me find a balanced overview of Cistercian and Bernardine spirituality. I had just finished reading a fine study, "Bernard et les premiers cisterciens face au problème de l'art."[21] There was a fine description of the Easter celebration, 1147, at the Parisian abbey of St-Denis. The Cistercian pope, Eugenius III, was there to bless an incredible massive standing cross,

---

[19] In Thomas Merton, *The Last of the Fathers: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the encyclical letter, Doctor Mellifluus* (New York, 1954).

[20] Ibid., "2. Saint Bernard's Writings," pp. 45–67.

[21] An unsigned chapter, Chapter 28, in *Bernard de Clairvaux* (note 3 above), pp. 487–534.

with panels representing Old Testament types and their New Testament fulfilment. Above it all was Christ in regal splendour, enthroned over the whole of creation from the gibbet of the cross. Saint Bernard was the deacon of the Mass, Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, the subdeacon. The author spoke of how the Cistercian and the Cluniac looked at the cross and saw different things: for Peter, Christ reigning over the transfigured cosmos; for Bernard, Christ hanging from the cross, pit of love for us. This, I excitedly told Fr Louis, was the difference between Cluniac and Cistercian spirituality: Christ with the whole of creation in light-filled adoration before him, Christ in the poverty and pain and redeeming love of his Passion. "Yeah," was Fr Louis' response. "But there was plenty of light at Cîteaux." And this I've never forgotten.

The Bernardine spirituality I've come to know and love is a spirituality filled with light, even when it streams from Christ on the cross. It's truly a *devotio iocunda*, a devotion that gives one pleasure, a devotion that's pleasant—and God knows that we could do with a bit of this kind of devotion in our own troubled and war-torn world. I used to regret my inability to relate to Rhenish mysticism and the great mystics of the School, Ruysbroeck, Eckhart, Tauler. But Saint Bernard more than makes up for this.

Obviously, when it comes to my life with Saint Bernard, I owe Fr Louis a boundless debt of gratitude. Still, I picked up early on that the Merton-Bernard relationship was not always uniformly balmy. There was a reason for this, a reason which was completely unjust, a reason which sparks my anger even to this day. It was obvious, of course, that Fr Louis had come to monastic life bearing with him a passionate love for Friar John of the Cross and Madre Teresa of Avila. Already in 1950, the community had undergone an evolution. In former times, one had to receive special permission from the abbot to read the Carmelite mystics. And here was this ill-starred whippersnapper immersing himself in *The Dark Night of the Soul* when he should have been delving into Saint Bernard. The irony of it was that at that time there was no one in the monastery delving deeper into Saint Bernard than Fr Louis.

The problem reached crisis proportions when Fr Louis was appointed Father Master of us scholastics. The Novice Master was certain that we scholastics were going to be imbued with Carmelite spirituality, with the consequent loss of our Cistercian identity. Piffle. I was a scholastic during the whole time that Fr Louis was Master of the Scholastics, and

never once was Fr Louis the slightest bit guilty of trying to impregnate us with *San Juanist* spirituality. To compound matters, Fr Louis became our abbot's confessor; and our abbot began distributing copies of Saint John of the Cross to several of the brethren for their Lenten reading. Fr Louis' final word on the painful subject was written, however, as early as 1952, in a letter to the Carthusian, Dom Jean-Baptiste Porion:

> For me this matter of spirituality tries, superficially, to be a problem. Yet I know it can never really be a problem because after all what I love is not spirituality, but God.[22]

That's it! We love, not spirituality but God. Thanks to this insight, even my love for Bernard has never been something that closes me off from other forms of spirituality, other forms of spiritual experience. Loving Bernard, I could love everything (except the Rhineland mystics).

Still, Fr Louis could at times be a bit irritating. I remember the time he remarked to me that, for him, the Cistercian Fathers had been OK, but it was John of the Cross who really turned him on. This is a typical "Mertonism." It needs to be understood in the light of the speaker and the historical context. Being interpreted, it only means that Fr Louis loved Saint John of the Cross better than he did Saint Bernard. But because he loved Saint John of the Cross more doesn't mean that he loved Saint Bernard any the less. I do regret, however, that in the context of Fr Louis' own evolution, Saint Bernard sometimes stood for authority of a narrow sort: Mr. Super-Orthodoxy himself.

I know, of course, that not everyone has a love for Saint Bernard. One of my great joys has been to attend, almost every year, the series of Cistercian Conferences during the May swarm of medievalists at Western Michigan University. My first year there I was standing in the lunchtime line and had struck up a conversation with Douglass Roby. Doug had just completed a doctoral dissertation on Saint Bernard and the problem of *transitus* (the transfer from one monastery to another, or the transfer from one Order to another). Suddenly Doug broke off, looked at me expectantly, and pronounced triumphantly: "Bernard was a fascist pig."

How does one respond to something like that? I was much more hurt by a general lecture given by the then recognized authority on the

---

[22] Letter of 9 February 1952; quoted in the long article largely devoted to this theme, "Merton of Gethsemani & Bernard of Clairvaux," in *The Merton Annual* 5 (1992), 127.

Crusades, Steven Runciman. Dr Runciman was speaking about a sensible trade agreement between the Byzantine emperor and the Egyptian caliphate—a trade agreement which Saint Bernard had deplored. Bernard? "…a bigoted cleric." The audience roared with appreciative laughter and approval. For myself, I started thinking dark thoughts about Professor Runciman, "the bigoted Cambridge don." Medievalists will always be grateful to Runciman for his pioneering work on the Crusades. But scholars refer to him less and less. Runciman has had his day. Meanwhile, Bernard, the bigoted cleric from Clairvaux, is with us still.

I've also learned to be cautious when it comes to certain critics of Saint Bernard and early Cîteaux, critics who adopt the popular "myth? or reality?" approach. Their contributions need to be studied carefully and evaluated with equal care. They can often help us. But so many of them are filled with chaff. I also regret the dichotomy adopted by some other scholars: a source is either hagiography or history—and never the twain shall meet. But there is such a thing as hagiography with a sound basis in factual history. Some scholars need a course in how to read medieval literature. Here I could give a number of depressing examples, but I love some of these authors and respect others too much to do so here. But my own experience has been: Look at Saint Bernard critically, and he can hold his own. Easily.

I must confess to once even having had reserves about some of the writings of Fr Jean Leclercq. Fr Jean was horrified by the preference of some for a sanitized, painted plaster Saint Bernard. There came the time when he reacted in the opposite direction. It was when he was going through his psycho-history phase, goaded on by a group of psychiatrists at the Gregorian University in Rome. Just about this time we met at the Belgian abbey of Scourmont. He was just leaving, I was just arriving. He grabbed onto my arm, as he so often did, and we walked up and down the front alley leading to the gatehouse, happily chatting away about Saint Bernard. All of a sudden he stopped, paused, and then exclaimed: "O, what a wonderful man, Saint Bernard!" This told me more about Fr Jean and Saint Bernard than his then-current publications on the saint. He also told me with no little pride that the Italian version of his first book on Saint Bernard, *Saint Bernard Mystique* (1948), was about to be published. "You know," he said, "they say it's a masterpiece!" So Fr Jean's end with Saint Bernard was already there in his beginning. And how much I owe to Fr Jean! Has anyone ever served Saint Bernard as well as Fr Jean Leclercq?

Now, about the proper Saint Bernard Office. It was certainly an exception to 12th-century Cistercian practice. The general rule was that new saints added to the calendar had to be content with Offices and Masses already in the Cistercian repertory. Saint Bernard, whose proper Office was promulgated by the General Chapter in 1175, was a glorious exception. My first year or two at Gethsemani offered little chance of my coming into real contact with that Office: too many new and unfamiliar texts, too many exotic melodies. And when I did become more aware of the texts, I had problems. There was, for instance, the opening responsory of the Night Office: "The first virtue in this holy man / was the harmony of his bearing; / always his manner was composed and uniform, / so that nothing might appear in him / to give offence to those beholding him." Good grief, I thought—Bernard the model of good posture! This wasn't my idea of a liturgical text.

Only later did I come to realize the importance of what this responsory expressed: Bernard was one whose whole being was so integrated that his interior life found expression even in his outward comportment. You could look at Bernard and see what life in Christ was all about. But there were other texts, mainly from the Wisdom books, which puzzled me. What did it mean that "from the blood of the grape he poured forth a divine fragrance"? What did it mean that Bernard had "entered into the powers of the Lord"? Here Fr Louis was of little help. He loved, however, the sumptuous imagery of so many of the texts.

I remember his enthusiasm for the First Vespers responsory: "The blessed Bernard, like a vessel of solid gold / adorned with every precious stone, / poured forth streams of graces for the people . . . / He was like a brightly burning fire, / like sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer." I forget when it was that it first impinged upon my consciousness that such texts had to be understood within their biblical context. Here was a responsory pieced together from fragments of Ecclesiasticus 50. Chapter 50 is a hymn in praise of the reformer Simon the high priest, "who in his life propped up the house, and delivered it from destruction" (v. 4); who "took care of the nation, and delivered it from destruction" (v. 4); and who "prevailed to enlarge the city, and obtained glory in his conversation with the people . . ." (v. 5).

Perhaps it was at this same time that I began working with glossed books of the Bible—manuscripts where the biblical text was written in large letters, with big spaces between lines and around the margins, in which explanatory notes were culled from the Fathers and other

sources. The monks didn't so much read the Bible as it was in itself; rather, they read it as understood in the stream of an exegetical patristic tradition. So the reason for the choice of so many of the Saint Bernard Office-texts was less the biblical source taken in isolation than the biblical source as transmitted by the glosses. With the help of glosses taken from Rabanus Maurus, I learned that the vase was Saint Bernard's soul; that it was of solid gold, that is, full of wisdom; that it was adorned with every precious stone, namely, with every kind of virtue.

But the text which really worried me was the bland proper collect. It had for its author no less a personage than Pope Innocent III, who wrote it at the request of the brethren of Clairvaux: *Perfice, quæsumus, Domine, pium in nobis sanctæ religionis affectum*…, which can only mean: "Bring to perfection within us, we ask, O Lord, a love for holy religion…" To me, this didn't seem to refer, properly speaking, to Saint Bernard. It could refer to almost any saint. But then I found that the text had been transmogrified: the key word was not *affectum* but *effectum*; and in monastic vocabulary, *religio* didn't mean "religion" but meant "monastic observance." The collect now made sense, glorious sense. We were asking that Saint Bernard help us attain to the end, the result, the purpose of what monastic observance is all about. Each observance is invested with a dynamism that leads to its fulfilment, its perfection. Saint Bernard was supposed to help us to attain to the plenary realization of our monastic observances. Our observances are meant to carry us along until they find their perfect fulfilment—in, of course, the mystery of Christ. The moral: Be sure you understand the technical language of your text and that you have a decent correct version of the text. All this has helped in my reading of Saint Bernard.

Thanks to my work with the proper Saint Bernard Office, from then on I religiously tracked down his every biblical quote and allusion, putting them in their biblical context; and I checked, whenever I could, the glosses on the same. I also tried to have an authoritative Latin text before me; and I did my best to respect the true meaning of each word. It was a revelation. Saint Bernard opened up to me as never before.[23]

---

[23] I discussed all this in an article and edition of the St Bernard Office (with English translation): "The Clairvaux Saint Bernard Office: Ikon of a Saint," in *Bernardus Magister* (Kalamazoo, 1991), pp. 381–427.

Yet another thing I learned was that, almost every time a biblical quote is identified in the Leclercq edition of Saint Bernard, as an ancient Latin version or the *Vetus Itala*, the biblical quote is taken, rather, from some patristic source. To appreciate the just nuance of the non-Vulgate version of the text, and why Saint Bernard uses it, one needs to track down the way Cassian uses it, or Augustine, or Gregory, as the case may be.

And then there's the frankly hagiographical literature, which helped me see Saint Bernard the way the ordinary monk in the pew saw him, the monk without much by way of intellectual baggage. I'm thinking particularly of the wonderful early 13th-century collection of stories about 12th-century Clairvaux and Cîteaux. These stories helped me grow in intimacy with Saint Bernard. The title of this collection is the *Exordium magnum,* and it's divided into six *distinctiones*. Most of the second of these is devoted to Saint Bernard, the real Saint Bernard. I love the story, for instance, of the monk who couldn't receive Communion because he had lost his faith in the Real Presence. Bernard cured him of his malady. How? By telling him that, if he couldn't receive Communion on the strength of his own faith, he should receive Communion of the strength of Bernard's faith.[24] Then there's the story of the brigand who had terrorized a whole region. He was about to be hanged, and he deserved it. The noose was already around his neck. Saint Bernard grabbed the rope and led him back to Clairvaux; but first he clothed him in his own robes—a detail I love. At Clairvaux the poor fellow lived a long life and died a holy death. He wasn't exactly the most likely candidate for religious life. But for once in his troubled existence, he had received, through Saint Bernard, the experience of a mercy totally gratuitous, totally beyond all expectation. This was enough to set him on his way.[25]

And it's on this note of mercy that I'd like to end—with a quote from Fr Louis, of course. It's the end of his Preface to the already mentioned 1953 collection of studies on Saint Bernard.[26] The original English version of the text reads in part:

---

[24] *Exordium magnum Cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser (Rome, 1961), distinctio II, cap. 6.

[25] Ibid., Ch. 15.

[26] See above, note 3.

> Like every other saint . . . Bernard is a man who, plunging into the depths of his human nothingness comes back to us resplendent with the divine mercy. There is nothing left to us to see and praise in him but God. God transforms souls in Himself in order to satisfy the infinite experience of His mercy. The soul that is fullest of God's mercy gives God the fullest glory
>
> Bernard of Clairvaux was plainly conscious of the fact that his own life was to serve as evidence of the outpouring of God's mercy upon the world The outpouring of divine grace through the apostle sent by God is a manifestation of the inexhaustible love and mercy within God Himself—a fecundity which cannot contain itself, but must pour itself out into the hearts of men in order to inebriate them with the wisdom of sanctity.[27]

And that, in brief, is what my life with Saint Bernard at Gethsemani has been: grace after grace after grace, mercy within mercy, within mercy…

As I said, I'm an old man. As with many old men, my memory has become selective. I know that within the week, I'll be recalling things I should have said, or things I should have said better than I did here. But here I am, bare-footed and kicking up dust in my own Zima Junction of Gethsemani. This has been for me, however, no nostalgia trip at all. Nostalgia means a looking backward with regret for something lost. I myself have had it ever so much better than Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Yevtushenko had to leave Zima Junction early on; he was able to return only periodically, and not for long. I've never had to leave my Zima Junction; and the past, for me, is still very much a living present. No need, then, for nostalgia. And this, I think, is basically what tradition is all about: the past living on in the present, but opening on to what lies ahead. And make no mistake about it: the best is yet to come.

[27] As quoted on p. 130 of "Merton of Gethsemani & Bernard of Clairvaux" (note 22 above).

AFTERWORD: LOOKING BACK AT BERNARD

John R. Sommerfeldt

My first serious encounter with Bernard took place in 1952. My desperate desire at the time was to enter Gethsemani Abbey and live as a Trappist monk. My health was too fragile for the demanding Trappist routine, and so I found myself back at the University of Michigan as a sophomore. I agonized over the question: how do I reconcile an academic career—now my only perceived option—with an intense spiritual life?

I resolved to ask this question of Bernard of Clairvaux, the only Cistercian I knew of—with the exception of Thomas Merton. I anticipated that the answer I would get from Bernard would be an admonition to shun the intellectual life for as much of a life of penance and prayer as I could manage in the world. After all, I knew—or thought I knew—that Bernard had condemned Peter Abelard for attempting to apply reason to theological questions. Everything I had read—books, articles, encyclopedic references—said that Bernard was an obscurantist.

Another reason to turn to Bernard was that he was a contemplative and thus had, it seemed, a direct experiential awareness of the being and life of God. At this time I was a rather naive nominalist, convinced that rational inquiry was an ineffective, indeed worthless, epistemological method. After all, no one could demonstrate logically that logic worked. Such an effort constitutes a circular argument by its very nature illogical. But Bernard, I thought, did not need reason; he saw the transcendent God in a thoroughly transcendental way.

Bernard, I also thought, would surely be my guide to a life of intense asceticism. As a very recent Catholic I shared a view widespread among many converts and others—including many returning veterans like the co-pilot of the *Enola Gay*—that a life of penance and self-mortification was the only path to holiness. Given this Pelagian or, at least, semi-Pelagian stance, it was fitting to adopt the spirituality of the monk whom I thought was Bernard's most ardent disciple: Armond-Jean de Rancé, the austere abbot of La Trappe.[1] Like the members of the

[1] A good survey of the life and thought of Rancé is by A.J. Krailsheimer in *Rancé and the Trappist Legacy* (Kalamazoo, 1985). A lively approach to the same topic is by

17th-century French school of spirituality—Pierre de Bérulle, Jean-Jacques Olier, and Jean Eudes,[2] among others—Rancé held a completely negative view of human nature. Because of the Fall, human reason is darkened to the point that it is incapable of attaining authentic knowledge save by grace. The world is informed and governed by the severe justice of an avenging God. Only through a process of self-annihilation can we take on the divine status of Christ by hating our flesh and embracing pain, suffering, and persecution. With the cloak of these dismal views I clothed Bernard and resolved to follow him in self-mortification.

But Bernard surprised me. His first surprise was that he did not oppose Abelard's application of dialectics to theological questions.[3] Bernard's complaint was that Abelard had applied logic to questions beyond logic—like the Trinity—and that was illogical. Rational discourse, Bernard insisted, must be just that: rational. The misuse of logic was what Bernard rejected repeatedly and vehemently, and the errors which followed from Abelard's persistent and defiant use of logic had led him to heresy.[4]

Bernard demonstrated to me a much more complex and sophisticated epistemology than I had expected. For him the efficacious means of knowing included the certainty attained by faith,[5] the charismatic knowledge imparted directly to the mind as a gift of the Holy Spirit,[6] and the direct experience of the reality of God that he called contemplation.[7] Bernard also showed himself a humanist who saw beauty,

---

David N. Bell, in *Understanding Rancé: The Spirituality of the Abbot of La Trappe in Context* (Kalamazoo, 2005).

[2] Significant sections of the works of those accounted members of the French School can be found in *Berulle and the French School: Selected Writings*, ed. William M. Thompson, trans. Lowell M. Glendon (New York, 1989).

[3] I first presented this thesis in "Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* 46 (1961), 493–501. An expanded version which includes Bernard's assessment of Gilbert de la Porée can be found in Chapter 9 of my *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (New York, 2004), pp. 120–138.

[4] *Epistola in erroribus Abaelardi* [hereafter Abael.] 1–2; in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77) (abbreviated as SBO), 8, pp. 17–18. See also Abael. 9 (SBO 8, p. 24); *Epistola* [hereafter Ep.] 188.1 (SBO 8, p. 11); and Ep. 193 (SBO 8, p. 45). For further references, see *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 12–17.

[5] See *Sermo super Cantica Canticorum* [hereafter SC] 76; SBO 2, p. 258. See also *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 12–17.

[6] See, for example, SC 17.1; SBO 1, p. 98. More on this can be found in *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 17–22.

[7] See *De consideratione* 2.25; SBO 3, p. 414. See too *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 22–29.

especially the beauty of language, as efficacious in the pursuit and the dissemination of Truth.[8] Bernard also endorsed philosophical inquiry enthusiastically. That enthusiasm was based on three fundamental assumptions: the rational ordering of the universe, the accessibility of that ordered universe to the human mind through the senses; and the natural ability of the mind, structured according to the same rational pattern as the universe, to analyse and synthesize sense data.[9]

Bernard's cosmology and anthropology—and the soteriology which flowed from them—were surprises for me as well. The universe in which Bernard dwelled was energized, he was sure, by the creating and redeeming power of love, the love of a Creator God who is Love. All of creation, both matter and spirit, is immersed in the overwhelming goodness and indwelling love of God.[10]

Bernard was convinced that human beings, though often flawed by prideful self-centeredness, are basically good because God created them good. They are capable of the happiness for which they long and for which God destines them.[11] For Bernard the body is so essential to human nature and its perfection that we cannot fully enjoy the beatitude of paradise until our bodies rejoin our souls at the end of time.[12]

Bernard followed—to a point—Augustine of Hippo's analysis of the soul's faculties or powers. The intellect possesses the faculty of knowing and is perfected by the self-knowledge which Bernard called humility.[13] The will possesses the power to chose; its perfection lies in love: love for God, love for neighbour, love for self.[14] For Augustine's faculty

---

[8] See Ep. 89.1; SBO 7, p. 235. See also *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 30–39.

[9] See the several references in *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 40–45.

[10] See, for example, *De diligendo Deo* [hereafter Dil.] 12.35 (SBO 3, p. 149) and *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae* (SBO 3. p. 32). Other references can be found in my *The Spiritual Teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, 1991), pp. 95–101.

[11] See, for example, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 14.49; SBO 3, p. 201. See also SC 69.6 (SBO 2, pp. 205–206), and SC 24.5 (SBO 1, p. 157). See too *Spiritual Teachings* (note 10 above), pp. 205–210; and *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Life of the Mind* (note 3 above), pp. 10–11.

[12] See especially *Sermo in festivitate omnium sanctorum* 3.1; SBO 5, p. 350. Other sources are quoted or cited in *Spiritual Teachings* (note 10 above), pp. 35–37.

[13] See SC 36.5; SBO 2, p. 7. Pp. 53–63 of *Spiritual Teachings* (note 10 above) are devoted to Bernard's definition and description of humility.

[14] For love of God, see Dil. 1.1 (SBO 3, p. 120) and the several quotations in *Spiritual Teachings* (note 10 above), pp. 111–114. For love for neighbour, see Dil. 12.34 (SBO 3, p. 148) and the material quoted in *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 104–111. For love of self, see SC 50.6 (SBO 2, p. 82) and *Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 103–104.

of memory, Bernard substituted another faculty, the *affectus*, which functions in human attachment, emotion, feeling, and passion. Passion he did not regard as evil, and Augustine's aversion to sex he rejected out of hand. Indeed, Bernard spent some 18 years offering to his monks sermons on the erotic Old Testament poem the Song of Songs. In his talks, Bernard lyrically portrayed the sexual union between husband and wife as a convincing symbol of Christ's passionate love for each and every human being.[15]

Bernard believed that human nature demands the society of others and, therefore, that the human quest for happiness can be pursued only in a social context. And that context was, for Bernard, the people of God, the Church. For Bernard, Church and society were two sides of the same coin. He saw each person and each social group having a place and a role in a process very much like a pilgrimage. That pilgrimage has individual and corporate perfection as its goal. Bernard was sure that that society, that Church, is called to union with God, and thus that all individuals within Church and society are so called. The Church is not simply an institution or a corporation. She is the sum total of all those following, however feebly, the path to perfection.[16]

Bernard saw the Church as a sea crossed by three sorts of wayfarers: monks, clergy, and lay folk. Whatever social group we belong to or whatever way of life we find most compatible with our own individual nature or personal inclinations, God's love will provide for our needs. Different people receive different gifts. The very diversity in our paths to God was for Bernard a sign of unity, "a unity that consists in one love." Bernard was confident that a loving response to God's love will lead each person to happiness, no matter what path she or he follows. For "there is not just one path to follow," and "whatever path one follows… no one will be left outside the Father's house."[17]

---

[15] Bernard's 86 *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* are contained in volumes 1 and 2 of SBO. English translations are available in four volumes: *On the Song of Songs*, Cistercian Studies 4 (1971), 7 (1976), 31 (1979), and 40 (1980).

[16] See, for example, SC 68.2; SBO 2, p. 197. See also Jean Leclercq, "Saint Bernard on the Church," *Downside Review* 85 (1967), 274. Also my *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Spirituality of Relationship* (New York, 2004), pp. 4–6.

[17] *Apologia ad Guillellmum abbatem* 4.9; SBO 3, p. 89. See also *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Spirituality of Relationship* (note 16 above), pp. 6–12.

It has taken me nearly 60 years of study to discover that the Bernard I once wished to follow is a myth. It has taken me that long to discover the path that Bernard did indeed follow and along which I wish to follow him, however stumblingly. In my study of that path I have had many guides.

Foremost among them is Jean Leclercq, who acted always as my mentor and spiritual guide. To his death on 27 October 1993, Jean continued his own overwhelmingly important contributions to Bernardine scholarship. To the very end he continued to encourage beginning students and continuing studies by more advanced scholars with his characteristic humility and generosity. Jean not only inspired my work but also made it possible through his critical edition of Bernard's works and through the vast number of his books and articles on Bernard.

Jean was often heard to say that he looked forward to heaven because he had a number of questions he wished to ask Bernard. I too look forward to meeting Bernard. I envision him sitting in the centre of a celestial seminar. Surrounding him, I trust, will be my dear friends Chrysogonus Waddell, Paschal Phillips, Louis Lekai, and Basil Pennington—with their dear friend and the love of my life, Pat Sommerfeldt.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY: BRILL COMPANION TO BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Primary Sources

For Bernard's writings, the central source is the edition of Jean Leclercq and Henri Rochais (also with C.H. Talbot in the first two volumes), *Sancti Bernardi Opera*. Vol. 1–8. Rome, 1957–77: Vol. 1 and 2 contain the *Sermones in Cantica* (SC). Vol 3 treatises and smaller works, Vol. 4 sermons, including *Ad clericos de conversione*; Vol. 5 sermons; Vol. 6–1 sermons *de diversis*; Vol. 6–2 sentences and parables; Vol. 7 and 8 letters.

The Latin text contained in this edition is reproduced, together with German translation and helpful notes, translated from the Italian edition (ed. Ferruccio Gastaldelli, *Opere di San Bernardo*, Milan: 1984–2006), in Gerhard B. Winkler, *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Sämtliche Werke*. Vol. 1–10, Innsbruck, 1990–2002.

References in this volume are given mainly to the Leclercq-Rochais edition, abbreviated as SBO with volume and page number. Note that Leclercq-Rochais contains only a limited amount of background information, and therefore the Winkler edition often provides supplementary information.

Since the 1970s virtually all of Bernard's works have been translated to English in Cistercian Publications volumes. These are noted and used by several of the contributors to this volume. The series Sources chrétiennes (Les Editions du Cerf, Paris) has published the Leclercq-Rochais Latin text next to French translations, together with excellent introductions. For example *Sermons pour l'année* tome 1.1. Avent et Vigile de Noël. Trad. Marie-Imelda Huille. Sources chrétiennes no. 480. Paris, 2004.

The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux were originally translated by Bruno Scott James and published in London, 1953. They were reprinted in 1998 by Cistercian Publications with a new and valuable introduction by Beverly Mayne Kienzle.

The *Vita prima*, the first version of Bernard's hagiography, is contained in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 185, but a critical edition is scheduled for publication by Brepols under Paul Verdeyen in the series Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 89B.

All the works of Saint Bernard, plus the *Vita prima* and a number of pseudo-bernardine works, are now available as public domain from the Migne volumes 182–85 on http://www.binetii.ru/bernardus. Caution should be exercised, however, with the Migne text, which is basically that of Dom Jean Mabillon from the seventeenth century.

Abaelardus, Petrus. *Opera Theologica I. Commentaria in epistolam Pauli ad Romanos. Apologia contra Bernardum*. Ed. E.-M. Buytaert. Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis, CCCM 11. Turnhout, 1969.

——. *Opera Theologica II: Theologia Christiana, Theologia scholarium. Accedunt Capitula haeresum Petri Abaelardi.* Ed. E.-M. Buytaert. CCCM 12. Turnhout, 1969.

——. *Sic et Non*. Ed. B. Boyer and R. McKeon. Chicago, 1976–77.

——. *Historia calamitatum*. Ed. Jacques Monfrin. Paris, 1978.

——. *Confessio fidei "Universis."* Ed. Charles S.F. Burnett in "A Critical Edition of Abelard's Reply to Accusations of Heresy." *Mediaeval Studies* 48 (1986): 111–138.

——. *Opera Theologica III: Theologia "summi boni". Theologia "scholarium"*. Ed. E.M. Buytaert and C.J. Mews, CCCM 13. Turnhout, 1987.

——. *Opera Theologica* VI: *Sententie Magistri Petri Abaelardi*. Ed. David Luscombe. *Liber Sententiarum Magistri Petri*. Ed. Constant J. Mews. CCCM 14. Turnhout, 2006.
Aelred of Rievaulx. *Dialogue on the Soul*. Ed. C.H. Talbot. London, 1952. Also Kalamazoo, 1981.
——. *Liturgical Sermons* 1. The First Clairvaux Collection. Trans. Theodore Berkeley and M. Basil Pennington. Kalamazoo, 2001.
——. *Aelredi rievallensis opera omnia*. 1. *Opera ascetica*. Ed. Anselm Hoste and C.H. Talbot. CCCM 1. Turnhout, 1971.
——. *Opera Omnia 3. Sermones. Collectio Dunelmensis. Collectio Lincolniensis*. Ed. G. Raciti. CCCM 2B. Turnhout, 2001.
Alberic of Tre Fontane. *Chronicon*, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst. MGH SS 23. Hannover, 1874.
Alberigo, Joseph. *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*. Basil, 1962.
Benedict of Nursia. *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. Ed. Timothy Fry. Collegeville MN, 1981. Also trans. Justin McCann. London, 1976.
Berengarius Scholasticus. *Apologeticus contra beatum Bernardum*. In PL 178:1857–70.
Bell, David N. "The *Vita Antiqua* of William of Saint Thierry." CSQ 11 (1976): 246–255.
Berlière, U. *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique* 1. Maredsous, 1894.
Bernard of Clairvaux. *Cistercians and Cluniacs: St. Bernard's Apologia to Abbot William*. Trans. Michael Casey. In *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux 1. Treatises 1*. Shannon, Ireland, 1970.
——. *On Precept and Dispensation*. Trans. Conrad Greenia. In *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux* 1. *Treatises* 1 (as above). 103–150.
——. *On Loving God*. Trans. Robert Walton. In *Bernard of Clairvaux. Treatises II*. Washington, D.C., 1974. 93–132.
——. *The Steps of Humility and Pride*. Trans. M. Ambrose Conway, as above in *Treatises II*. 29–82.
——. *On Loving God*. Trans. M. Ambrose Conway, as above in *Treatises II*. 91–132.
——. *In Praise of the New Knighthood*. Trans. Conrad Greenia, In *Bernard of Clairvaux. Treatises III*. Kalamazoo MI, 1977. 127–167.
——. *On Grace and Free Choice*. Trans. Daniel O'Donovan, as above in *Treatises III*. 51–111.
——. *Five Books on Consideration. Advice to a Pope*. Trans. John D. Anderson and Elisabeth T. Kennan. Kalamazoo MI, 1976
——. *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*. Trans. Robert T. Meyer. Kalamazoo MI, 1978.
——. *On the Song of Songs*. I (Sermons 1–20), trans. Kilian Walsh. Kalamazoo, 1977. II (Sermons 21–46), trans. Kilian Walsh. 1976. III (Sermons 47–66), trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, 1979. IV (Sermons 67–86), trans. Irene Edmonds. 1980. Also trans. by "A Priest of Mount Melleray" = Ailbe Luddy, *Saint Bernard's Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles*. 2 vols. Dublin, 1920.
——. *Sermons on Conversion*. Trans. Marie-Bernard Saïd. Kalamazoo, 1981.
——. *Sermons for the Summer Season: Liturgical Sermons from Rogationtide and Pentecost*. Trans. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and James Jarzembowski. Kalamazoo, 1991.
——. *The Parables and the Sentences*. Trans. Michael Casey and Francis R. Swietek. Kalamazoo, 2000.
——. *On the Conduct and Office of Bishops*. In *On Baptism and the Office of Bishops: Two Letter-Treatises*. Trans. Pauline Matarasso. Kalamazoo, 2004.
Bernard of Clairvaux and an unknown Cistercian. *Epistola S. Bernardi de revisione cantus cisterciensis et tractatus scriptus ab auctore incerto cisterciense: Cantum quem cisterciensis ordinis ecclesiae cantare consueverant*. Ed. and trans. Francis J. Guentner. Corpus Scriptorum de Musica. Rome, 1974.
Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne. *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Trans. Marie-Bernard Saïd and Grace Perigo. Kalamazoo, 1979.

Bérulle, Pierre de. *Berulle and the French School: Selected Writings*. Ed. William M. Thompson. Trans. Lowell M. Glendon. New York, 1989.
Bible, *New Revised Standard Version*. New York and Oxford, 1989.
Canivez, J.-M., ed. *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad 1786*. 8 vols. Louvain, 1933–41.
Canut, Françoise. *Le cartulaire de l'abbaye de Signy*. Thesis: Ecole Nationale des Chartes, Paris: 1966.
Cawley, Martinus, trans. *Bernard of Clairvaux: Early Biographies*. Volume I: *Vita prima*. William of Saint Thierry. Lafayette OR, 2000.
Caesarius of Heisterbach. *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*. Ed. Alfons Hilka, vol. 3. Bonn, 1937.
Chibnall, Marjorie, ed. and trans. *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*. 6 vols. Oxford, 1969–80.
Choisselet, Danièle and Placide Vernet. *Les Ecclesiastica Officia cisterciens du XIIème siècle*. Reiningue France, 1989.
Coleman, Janet. *Ancient and Medieval Memories*. Cambridge GB, 1992.
Conrad of Eberbach. *Exordium magnum cisterciense*. Ed. Bruno Griesser. Rome, 1961. Reprinted in CCCM, 138. Turnhout, 1994–97.
Constable, Giles, ed. *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*. Vol. 1–2. Cambridge Mass., 1967.
Cossé-Durlin, J. *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims (XIIIe siècle)*. Paris, 1991.
Cronne, H.A. and R.H.C. Davis., ed. *Regesta regum anglo-normannorum 1066–1154*. Oxford, 1968.
Cusimano, Richard, trans. *A Translation of the Chronicle of the Abbey of Morigny, France, c. 1100–1150*. Lewiston NY, 2003.
Davy, M.-M. See under "William of Saint Thierry".
Dufour, Jean. *Recueil des Actes de Louis VI roi de France (1108–37)*. 4 vols. Paris, 1992–94.
Gallia Christiana. Ed. Denis de Saint-Marthe and Congregation de Saint-Maur. 16 vol. Paris. Repr. 1970.
Gallia Monastica. I: *Les abbayes bénédictins du diocèse de Reims*. Ed. Françoise Poirier-Coutansais. Paris, 1874.
Glossa Ordinaria (Bible commentary). *The* Glossa Ordinaria *on the Song of Songs*. Trans. Mary Dove. Kalamazoo MI, 2004.
Goswin of Douai. *Vita Goswini*, ed. M. Boquet. *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 14. Paris, 1806. 442–448.
Griesser, Bruno P. "Die *Ecclesiastica Officia Cisterciensis Ordinis* des Cod. 1711 von Trient." AC 12 (1956): 153–280.
Grierson, Philip, ed. *Les annales de Saint-Amand*. Brussels, 1937.
Guilelmus a Sancto Theodorico. *Opera Omnia II. Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos*. Ed. P. Verdeyen. CCCM 86. Turnhout, 1989.
——. *Opera Omnia III. Opera didactica et spiritualia*. Ed. P. Verdeyen and S. Ceglar. CCCM 88. Turnhout, 2003.
——. *Opera Omnia* IV. *Meditationes* devotivae. Ed. P. Verdeyen. CCCM 89. Turnhout, 2005. Previously in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 180.
——. *Opera Omnia V. Opuscula adversus Petrum Abaelardum et de fide*. Ed. P. Verdeyen. CCCM 89A. Turnhout 2007.
Guillaume de Saint Thierry: See under "William of Saint Thierry"
Hugh of Saint Victor. *Didascalicon*. Trans. Jerome Taylor. New York, 1991.
Huygens, R.B.C. ed. *Metamorphosis Goliae*, CCCM 171. Turnhout, 2000.
Idung of Prüfening. *Dialogus duorum monachorum*. Ed. Robert B.C. Huygens. Spoleto, 1972. Trans. as *Cistercians and Cluniacs. The Case for Cîteaux*. Trans. Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan. Kalamazoo, 1977.
Isaac of Stella. *Sermons d'Isaac de l'Etoile*. Sources chrétiennes 339. Lyon, 1987.

Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea. Ed. Th. Graesse. Osnabrück, 1965. *The Golden Legend*. Trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger. New York, 1969. Also Harmondsworth, Eng., 1998.

Jaffé, Philipp, ed. *Udalrici Codex. Monumenta Bambergensia. Bibliotheca rerum germanicarum* 5. Berlin, 1869.

James, Bruno Scott, trans. *The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*. London, 1953, reprinted 1980; revised by Beverly Mayne Kienzle: Kalamazoo, 1998.

John of Salisbury. *Historia pontificalis. Memoirs of the Papal Court*. Ed. Marjorie Chibnall. London, 1956.

Könsgen, Ewald, ed. *Epistolae duorum amantium*. Leiden, 1974.

Lechat, Robert. "Les Fragmenta de vita et miraculis S. Bernardi." *Analecta Bollandiana* 50 (1932): 83–122.

Legendre, Olivier, ed. *Collectaneum exemplorum et visionum clarevallense*. Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis 208.Turnhout, 2005.

Lemoine, M. *Guilelmus de sancto Teodorico: De natura corporis et animae*. Paris, 1988.

Leroquais, V. *Les livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*. 2 vols. Paris, 1927.

Mansi, Giovanni Domenico. *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*. Vol. 21. Florence, 1759; reprint Paris, 1998. Also *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. 2 vols. Ed. and trans. Norman Tanner. Washington D.C., 1990.

Matarasso, Pauline, trans. *The Cistercian World*. Harmondsworth, Eng., 1993.

McGinn, Bernard, ed. *Three Treatises on Man. A Cistercian Anthropology*. Kalamazoo MI, 1988.

Mirot, Léon, ed. *La chronique de Morigny*. Paris, 1912.

Odo of Deuil. *De profectione Ludovici vii in orientem. The Journey of Louis VII to the East*. Trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry. New York. 1948.

Otto of Freising. *Die Taten Friedrichs*. Herausg. Franz-Josef Schmale. Darmstadt, 1965. Trans. Charles Christopher Mierow, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*. New York, 1953 (2004). *Gesta Friderici imperatoris*

Panofsky, Erwin. ed. and trans. *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*. Princeton N.J., 1979.

Poncelet, A., ed. "Vie ancienne de Guillaume de Saint Thierry." In *Mélanges Godefroid Kurth* 1. Liège, 1908. 117–122.

Radulfus de Diceto, *Imaginibus Historiarum*. In Martin Bouquet and Léopold Delisle, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Vol. 13. Paris, 1840–1904.

Robert of Basevorn, *De arte praedicandi*. Ed. Th.-M. Charland, *Artes praedicandi: contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au Moyen Age*. Paris and Ottawa, 1936.

——. *The Form of Preaching*. Trans. Leopold Krul, in James J. Murphy, ed. *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*. Berkeley, 1971.

Robert of Melun. *Pro Petro Abaelardo. Un plaidoyer de Robert de Melun contre Saint Bernard*. Ed. R.M. Martin. *Revue de sciences philosophiques et théologique* 12 (1923): 308–33.

Rupert of Deutz, *De vita vere apostolica*. In Migne, PL 170:609–664.

——. *Rupertus Tuitiensis Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*. Ed. H. Haacke. CCCM 26. Turnhout, 1974.

Smits. E.R. *Peter Abelard. Letters IX–XIV*. Groningen, 1983.

Stercal, Claudio and Milvia Fiorini, ed. *Le origini cisterciensi: documenti*. Milan, 2004.

Symeon of Durham. *Historia regum*, in Arnold, Thomas (ed.). *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*. 2 vols. London, 1885.

Waddell, Chrysogonus, ed. *Cistercian Liturgy Series (CLS)*, vol. 3–7. *The Old French Ordinary and Breviary of the Abbey of the Paraclete.* Gethsemani Abbey, KY, 1983–85.

——. *The Paraclete Statutes. Institutiones Nostrae. Introduction. Edition, Commentary*. CLS 20. Gethsemani Abbey, KY, 1987.

——. *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*. Studia et Documenta 9. Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses, 1999.
——. *The Primitive Cistercian Breviary (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Lat. Oct. 402) with Variants from the "Bernardine" Cistercian Breviary*. Spicilegium Friburgense 44. Fribourg, 2007.
Walbran, J.R. and J.T. Fowler. *Memorials of the Abbey of St. Mary of Fountains*. 3 vol. Surtees Society 42, 67, 130. Durham GB, 1863–1918.
Walter of Mortagne. "Epistola ad Petrum Abaelardum." Ed. H. Ostlender. *Florilegium Patristicum* 19 (1929): 34–35.
Weibull, Lauritz and Niels Skyum-Nielsen, ed. *Diplomatarium Danicum* I Række, 2 Bind. Copenhagen, 1963.
William of Malmesbury. *Chronicle of the Kings of England*. Trans. J.A. Giles. London, 1847. Repr. New York, 1968.
William of Saint Thierry. See also under "Guilelmus".
——. *On the Nature and Dignity of Love*. Trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker. London, 1956 [a paraphrase more than a translation]. See *William of Saint Thierry: The Nature and Dignity of Love*. Trans. Thomas X. Davis. Kalamazoo, 1981.
——. *St Bernard of Clairvaux. The Story of his Life as Recorded in the* Vita prima Bernardi. Trans. Webb and Walker. London, 1960.
——. *Exposition on the Song of Songs*. Trans. Columba Hart. Spencer Mass., 1970.
——. *The Golden Epistle*. Trans. Theodore Berkeley. Spencer Mass., 1971.
——. *Guillaume de Saint Thierry. Lettre aux frères du Mont Dieu*. Ed. Marie-Madeleine Davy. Paris, 1940.
——. *Un traité de la vie solitaire*. Paris, 1940.
——. *Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu*. Ed. M.-M. Davy. [Latin-French editions of *On Contemplating* God and *The Nature and Dignity of* Love] Paris, 1953.
——. *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques*. Ed. M.-M. Davy. Paris, 1958.
——. *Deux traités sur la foi*. Ed. M.-M. Davy [*Mirror of* Faith and *Enigma of* Faith] Paris, 1959.
——. *Lettres aux frères du Mont-Dieu*. Ed. Jean Déchanet. Sources chrétiennes 223. Paris, 1975.
——. *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques*. Ed. M.-M. Davy. Paris, 1958.
——. *Traité de la contemplation de Dieu. Oraison de Dom Guillaume*. Ed. Jacques Hourlier. Sources chrétiennes 61bis. Paris, 1959; 2005.
Ziolkowski, Jan M., trans. *The Letters of Peter Abelard. Beyond the Personal*. Washington, D.C., 2008.

Secondary Sources

Altermatt, Alberich. "*Christus pro nobis*: Die Christologie Bernhards von Clairvaux in den *Sermones per annum*." AC 33 (1977): 3–176.
Aubé, Pierre, *Saint Bernard de Clairvaux*. Paris, 2003.
Auberger, Jean-Baptiste. *L'unanimité cistercienne primitive: mythe ou realité*. Achel, Belgium and Cîteaux, 1986.
Auerbach, Erich. "Figura." *Archivum Romanicum* 22 (1938): 436–489. Trans. in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*. Gloucester Mass., 1959, repr. 1973.
—. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton, 1953.
Barber, Malcolm. *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple*. Cambridge GB, 1994.
Bautier, Robert-Henri. "Paris au temps d'Abélard." In *Abélard en son temps*. Ed. Jean Jolivet. Paris, 1981. 21–77.

——. "Les origines et les premiers développements de l'abbaye Saint-Victor de Paris." In *L'abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au Moyen Age*. Ed. Jean Longère. Paris, 1991. 23–52.

Bell, David N. "Greek, Plotinus, and the Education of William of Saint Thierry." *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 30 (1979): 221–248.

——. *Image and Likeness. The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint-Thierry*. Kalamazoo, 1984.

——. *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*. London, 1992.

——. "'In Their Mother Tongue': A Brief History of the English Translation of Works by and Attributed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: 1496–1970." In *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Studies in Honor of Jean Leclercq*. Ed. E. Rozanne Elder. Kalamazoo MI, 1995. 291–308.

——. *Understanding Rancé: The Spirituality of the Abbot of La Trappe in Context*. Kalamazoo, 2005.

Benton, John F. "Philology's Search for Abelard in the *Metamorphosis Goliae*." *Speculum* 50 (1975): 199–217. Reprinted in *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*. Ed. Thomas Bisson. London, 1991. 455–473.

——. "Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise." (1975). Reprinted in *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France* (as above). 417–49.

——. "Nicolas de Clairvaux." In *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 11 (1981): 255–259.

——. "Suger's Life and Personality." In *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France* (as above). 387–410.

Berlioz, Jacques. "La lactation de Saint Bernard dans un *exemplum* et une miniature du *Ci nous dit*." *Cîteaux* 39 (1988): 270–283.

Berman, Constance. *The Cistercian Evolution*: *The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe*. Philadelphia PA: 2000.

Bernard de Clairvaux. Histoire. mentalités, spiritualité. Colloque de Lyon-Cîteaux-Dijon. Sources chrétiennes 380. Paris, 1992.

Berserik, C.J. and J.M.A. Caen. *Silver-Stained Roundels and Unipartite Panels before the French Revolution*. Turnhout, 2007.

Bochet, Isabelle. *Saint Augustin et le désire de Dieu*. Paris, 1982.

Bodard, Claude. "Christus-Spiritus: Incarnation et résurrection dans la théologie de saint Bernard." In *Sint Bernardus van Clairvaux: Gedenkboek*. Rotterdam, 1953. 89–104.

Bosch, Amatus van den. "Présupposés à la Christologie Bernardine." *Cîteaux* 8 (1957): 78–91.

Bossuyt, Ignace. "Bernardus van Clairvaux en de hervorming van de liturgische zang." In *Bernardus en de Cisterciënzerfamilie in België*, ed. M. Sabbe, M. Lamerigts and F. Gistelinck. Leuven, 1990. 115–125.

Bredero, Adriaan H. "Un brouillon du XIIe siècle: L'autographe de Geoffrey d'Auxerre." *Scriptorium* 13 (1959): 27–60.

——. *Etudes sur la "Vita Prima" de Saint Bernard*. Rome, 1960. Also published in AC 17 (1961): 3–72 and 215–60, and 18 (1962): 3–59.

——. "Saint Bernard and the Historians." In *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: Studies Commemorating the Eighth Centenary of his Canonization*, ed. M. Basil Pennington. Kalamazoo MI, 1977. 27–62.

——. "The Canonization of Bernard of Clairvaux." In *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (as above). 63–100.

——. "William of Saint Thierry at the Crossroads of the Monastic Currents of his Time." In *William, Abbot of Saint Thierry*, trans. Jerry Carfantan. Kalamazoo MI, 1988. 113–137. Originally published as "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry au carrefour des courants monastiques de son temps." In *Saint-Thierry. Une abbaye du Vie aux XXe siècle. Colloque internationale d'histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry. II. Guillaume de Saint-Thierry*. Saint-Thierry, 1979. 279–297.

——. "Saint Bernard est-il né en 1090 ou en 1091?" In *Papauté, monachisme et théories politique 1. Le pouvoir et l'institution ecclésiale. Etudes d'histoire médiévale offertes à Marcel Pacaut*, ed. P. Guichard et alii. Lyon, 1994. 229–241.
——. "The Sainthood of Bernard of Clairvaux." *Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages*. Grand Rapids MI, 1994. 181–197.
——. *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History*. Grand Rapids MI, 1996.
Brooke, Christopher. "St. Bernard, the Patrons and Monastic Planning." *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*. Ed. Christopher Norton and David Park. Cambridge GB, 1986. 11–23.
Brooke, Odo. *Studies in Monastic Theology*. Kalamazoo, 1980.
Bruun, Mette B. "Procession and Contemplation in Bernard of Clairvaux's First Sermon for Palm Sunday." In *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification*. Ed. N.H. Petersen, M.B. Bruun, J. Llewellyn and E. Østrem. Turnhout, 2004. 67–82.
——. *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography*. Leiden, 2007.
——. "The Wilderness as *lieu de mémoire:* Literary Deserts of Cîteaux and La Trappe." In *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*. Ed. M.B. Bruun and S. Glaser. Turnhout, 2008.
Burton, Janet. *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069–1215*. Cambridge GB, 1999.
Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley CA, 1982.
Cahn, Walter. "The Rule and the Book: Cistercian Book Illumination in Burgundy and Champagne." In *Monasticism and the Arts*. Ed. Timothy G. Verdon. Syracuse NY, 1984. 139–172.
——. *Romanesque Manuscripts: The Twelfth Century*, 2 vols. London, 1996.
Carfantan, Jerry, trans. *William, Abbot of Saint Thierry: A Colloquium at the Abbey of St Thierry*. Kalamazoo, 1987.
Carruthers. Mary. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge GB, 1990.
Casey, Michael. "Bernard the Observer." In *Goad and Nail: Studies in Medieval Cistercian History X*. Kalamazoo MI, 1985. 1–20.
——. *Athirst for God: Spiritual Desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs*. Kalamazoo MI, 1988.
——. "Herbert of Clairvaux's *Book of Wonderful Happenings*." CSQ 25 (1990): 37–64.
——. "*In communi vita fratrum*: St. Bernard's Teaching on Cenobitic Solitude." AC 46 (1990): 243–261.
——. "Bernard of Clairvaux: Forty Years of Scholarship." In *St Bernard of Clairvaux: The Man*, ed. John Stanley Martin. Melbourne, Australia, 1991. 31–45.
——. "Towards a Methodology for the *Vita Prima*: Translating the First Life into Biography." In *Bernardus Magister*. Ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo MI, 1992. 55–70.
——. "Le spirituel: Les grands thèmes Bernardins." In *Bernard de Clairvaux: histoire, mentalités, spiritualité*. Paris, 1992: 605–635.
——. "Bernard of Clairvaux: The Face behind the Persona." CSQ 27 (1992): 133–151.
——. "Bernard's Biblical Mysticism: Approaching *Sermones in Cantica* 74." *Studies in Spirituality* 4 (1994): 12–30.
——. "The Value of Stability." CSQ 31 (1996): 278–301.
——. "Bernard and the Crisis at Morimond: Did the Order Exist in 1124?" *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 38 (2003): 119–175.
——. "The Failing of Monks in Guerric's Sermons." CSQ 43 (2008): 439–463.
——. "The Book of Experience: The Western Monastic Art of *Lectio Divina*." *Eye of the Heart* 2 (2008): 5–31.
Caviness, Madeline. "Suger's Glass at Saint-Denis: The State of Research." In *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium.* Ed. Paula Lieber Gerson. New York, 1986. 257–272.

Ceglar, Stanley. "William of Saint Thierry: The Chronology of his Life." Dissertation. Catholic University of America, 1971.
——. "William of Saint Thierry and his Leading Role at the first Chapters of the Benedictine Abbots (Reims, 1131: Soissons, 1132). In *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye du VIe au XXe siècle*. Saint-Thierry, 1979. 312–319.
Chadd, D.F.L. "Liturgy and Liturgical Music." In *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*. Ed. Christopher Norton and David Park. Cambridge GB, 1986. 299–314.
Chatillon, François. "Regio Dissimilitudinis." In *Mélanges E. Podechard*. Lyons, 1945. 85–102.
Châtillon, Jean. "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, le monachisme et les écoles: A propos de Rupert de Deutz, d'Abélard et de Guillaume de Conches." In *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye du VIe au XXe siècle: Actes du colloque international d'histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry*. Saint-Thierry, France, 1979. 2:375–94.
Chen, Sheryl Frances. "Bernard's Prayer Before the Crucifix that Embraced Him: Cistercians and Devotions to the Wounds of Christ." CSQ 29 (1994): 23–54.
Clanchy, Michael T. *Abelard: A Medieval Life*. Oxford, 1999.
Commission d'Histoire de l'Ordre de Cîteaux. *Bernard de Clairvaux*. Paris, 1953.
Constable, Giles. "The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries." *Traditio* 9 (1953): 212–279.
——. "A Report of a Lost Sermon by St. Bernard on the Failure of the Second Crusade." In *Studies in Medieval Cistercian History Presented to Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan.* Shannon, Ireland, 1971. 49–54.
——. "Monachisme et pèlerinage au Moyen Age." *Revue historique* 523 (1977): 3–27.
Coomans, Thomas. *L'abbaye de Villers: Construction, configuration et signification d'une abbaye cistercienne gothique*. Cîteaux, 2000.
Coppack, Glyn. "'According to the Form of the Order': The Earliest Cistercian Buildings in England and their Context." In *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*. Ed. Terryl Kinder. Turnhout, 2004. 35–46.
Cossé-Durlin, Jeannine, ed. *Cartulaire de Saint-Nicaise de Reims*. Paris, 1991.
Courcelle, Pierre. "Tradition néo-platonicienne et traditions chrétiens de la 'région de dissemblance'." *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 32 (1957): 5–33.
——. "Témoins nouveaux de la 'Region de dissemblance'." *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartres* 118 (1960): 20–36.
Crosby, Sumner McKnight. *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis from its Beginnings to the Death of Suger 475–1151*. New Haven Conn., 1987.
Dahan, Gilbert. *L'exégèse de la Bible en occident médiéval*. Paris, 1999.
Déchanet, Jean-Marie. "L'amitié d'Abélard et de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry." *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 35 (1939): 761–774.
——. "Meditativa oratio n. XIII: Une page encore inédite de Guillaume de St.-Thierry." *Collectanea OCR* 7 (1946): 2–12.
——. *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: L'Homme et ses œuvres*. Bruges, 1942. Trans. *William of Saint Thierry: The Man and his Works*. Spencer Mass., 1972.
——. "La Christologie de saint Bernard." AC 9 (1953): 78–91.
Delfgaauw, Pacificus. *Saint Bernard: Maître del' amour divin*. Paris, 1994.
Deutsch, S. Martin. *Die Synode von Sens 1141 und die Verurteilung Abaelards*. Berlin, 1880.
Dimier, Anselme. "Saint Bernard et le droit en matière de *transitus*." *Revue Mabillon* 48 (1953): 48–83.
——. "Les fondations manquées de saint Bernard." *Cîteaux* 20 (1969): 4–13.
——. "Sur le pas de saint Bernard." *Cîteaux Commentarii Cistercienses* 25 (1974): 223–248.

Dinzelbacher, Peter. *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Leben und Werk des berühmten Zisterziensers*. Darmstadt, 1998.
Dodwell, C.R. *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800–1200*. New Haven Conn., 1993.
Doyle, Kathleen. "Rereading Saint Bernard: Text, Context and the Art Historical Interpretation of the *Apologia*." Dissertation. Courtauld Institute of Art. London, 2004.
Duby, Georges. *Saint Bernard: L'art cistercien*. Paris, 1979.
Dufief, André. *Les cisterciens en Bretagne XIIe–XIII siècles*, Rennes, 1997.
Dumontier, Pierre. *Saint Bernard et la Bible*. Paris, 1953.
Dupeux, Cécile. "Saint Bernard dans l'iconographie médiévale: l'exemple de la lactation." In *Vies et légendes de Saint Bernard de Clairvaux*. Ed. P. Arabeyre, J. Berlioz and P. Poirrier. Cîteaux, 1993. 167–172.
Elder, E. Rozanne. "The Christology of William of St. Thierry." *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 58 (1991): 79–112.
——. "Making Virtues out of Vexing Habits." In Studiosorum speculum*: Essays in Honor of Louis J. Lekai*. Kalamazoo MI, 1993. 75–94.
——. ed. *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God: Essays in Honor of Jean Leclercq*. Kalamazoo MI, 1995.
——. "Guillaume de Saint Thierry et le chapitre général bénédictin de 1131." In *Signy l'abbaye: Site cistercien enfoui, site de mémoire de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Actes du Colloque international d'Etudes cisterciennes*, ed. Nicole Boucher. Signy, 2000. 487–504.
——. "Christologie de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry et vie spirituelle." Also in *Signy l'abbaye*: 575–587.
——. "Communities of Reform in the Province of Rheims: The Benedictine 'Chapter General' of 1131." In *The Making of Christian Communities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Ed. Mark F. Williams. London, 2005. 117–129 and 182–188.
Elm, Kasper, ed. *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*. Wiesbaden, 1994.
Esser, Karl Heinz. "Les fouilles à Himmerod et le plan bernardin." In *Mélanges saint Bernard. Congrès de l'Association bourguignonne des sociétés savantes*. 24. Congrès. Dijon, 1953. 311–315.
Eynde, Damien van den. "Les débuts littéraires de saint Bernard." AC 19 (1963): 189–198.
——. "Les premiers écrits de S. Bernard." In Jean Leclercq, *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits* III. 343–422.
Farkasfalvy, Denis. "Use and Interpretation of St. John's Prologue in the Writings of Saint Bernard." *AC* 35 (1979): 205–226.
——. "The Use of Paul by Saint Bernard as Illustrated by Saint Bernard's Interpretation of Philippians 3:13." In *Bernardus Magister*. Ed. John Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo, 1992. 161–168.
Feiss. Hugh. "*Bernardus Scholasticus*: The Correspondence of Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of St Victor on Baptism." In *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo, 1992. 360–377.
Ferguson, Margaret. "Saint Augustine's Region of Unlikeness: The Crossing of Exile and Language." *The Georgia Review* 29 (1975): 842–864.
Figuet, Jean. "La Bible de Bernard: Données et ouvertures." In *Bernard de Clairvaux: Histoire, mentalités, spiritualité*. Ed. D. Bertrand and G. Lobrichon. Paris, 1992. 237–270.
Flint, Valerie. "The Chronology of the Works of Honorius Augustodunensis." *Revue bénédictine* 82 (1972): 215–242.
Forsyth, Ilene H. "Narrative at Moissac: Shapiro's Legacy." *Gesta* 41 (2002): 71–94.
Fournée, J. "Les orientations doctrinales de l'iconographie mariale à la fin de époque romane." *Bulletin du Centre international d'études romanes* (1971): 23–60.
France, James. *The Cistercians in Medieval Art*. Kalamazoo, 1998.

——. *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*. Kalamazoo, 2007.
Frijda, Nico. *The Emotions. Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction*. Cambridge GB, 1986.
Führer, Julian. *König Ludwig VI von Frankreich und die Kanonreform*. Frankfurt. 2008.
Gaborit-Chopin, Danielle. "Suger's Liturgical Vessels." In *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium*. Ed. Paula Lieber Gerson. New York, 1986. 282–293.
Gasper, Giles E.M. *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance*. London, 2004.
Gastaldelli, Ferruccio, "I primi vent'anni de San Bernardo: Problemi e interpretazioni." Gastaldelli, *Studi su San Bernardo e Goffredo di Auxerre*. Florence, 2001. 3–41.
——. "Le più antiche testimonianze biografiche su San Bernardo. Studio storico-critico sui 'Fragmenta Gaufridi'." In *Studi su San Bernardo* (above). 43–127. Originally in *Analecta Cisterciensia* 45 (1989): 4–80.
Gervers, Michael, ed. *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*. New York, 1992.
Ghellinck, Joseph de. *Le mouvement théologique au douzième siècle*. Bruges, 1948; Brussels, 1969.
Gilson, Etienne. *La théologie mystique de Saint Bernard*. Paris, 1934, repr. 1947, 1986. Trans. *The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard*. London, 1940. Kalamazoo, 1990.
——. *Saint Bernard: un itinéraire de retour à Dieu*. Paris, 1964.
Grant, Lindy. *Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis*. London, 1998.
Greenaway, George William, *Arnold of Brescia*. Cambridge GB, 1931; repr. New York, 1978.
Häring, Nicolas. "Die Vierzehn *Capitula Haeresum* Petri Abaelardi." *Cîteaux* 31 (1980): 35–52.
Hecke. Lode van. *Le désir dans l'expérience religieuse: L'homme réunifié. Relecture de Saint Bernard*. Paris. 1990.
Heller, Dagmar. *Schriftauslegung und geistliche Erfahrung bei Bernhard von Clairvaux*. Würzburg, 1990.
Hiestand, R. "Kardinalbischof Matthaüs von Albano, das Konzil von Troyes und die Entstehung des Tempelordens." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 99 (1988): 295–325.
Holdsworth, Christopher. "The Chronology and Character of Early Cistercian Legislation on Art and Architecture." In *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*. Ed. C. Norton and D. Park. Cambridge GB, 1986. 40–55.
——. "Bernard: Chimera of his Age." In *Essays in Honor of Edward B. King*. Ed. Robert G. Benson and Eric W. Naylor. Sewanee TN, 1991. 147–164.
——. "The Early Writings of Bernard of Clairvaux." *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 45 (1994): 21–61.
——. "The Reception of Saint Bernard in England." In *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und der Neuzeit*. Wiesbaden, 1994. 161–178.
——. "Sanctity and Secularity in Bernard of Clairvaux." *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 75 (1995): 149–164.
——. "Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux by Chrysogonus Waddell: A Review Article." *Cîteaux:Commentarii Cistercienses* 51 (2000): 157–166.
——. "The Affiliation of Savigny." In *Truth as Gift. Studies in Medieval Cistercian History in Honor of John Sommerfeldt*. Ed. Marsha L. Dutton. Kalamazoo MI, 2004. 43–88.
——. "Reading the Signs: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Miracles." In *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates. Woodbridge, Suffolk GB, 2006. 161–172.
Jaeger, Stephen. "Peter Abelard's Silence at the Council of Sens." In *Scholars and Courtiers: Intellectuals and Society in the Medieval West*. Aldershot GB, 2002.
James, Bruno Scott. *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*. London, 1957.
Kienzle, Beverly Mayne. "*Verbum Dei et verba Bernardi*: The Function of Language in Bernard's Second Sermon for Peter and Paul." In *Bernardus Magister*. Ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo MI, 1992. 149–160.

Kinder, Terryl. "Les églises médiévales de Clairvaux: Probabilités et fiction." In *Histoire de Clairvaux. Actes du Colloque*. Association Renaissance de l'Abbaye de Clairvaux. Bar-sur-Aube, 1992. 204–29.
——. *Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation*. Kalamazoo, 2002.
King, Archdale A. *Cîteaux and her Elder Daughters*. London, 1954.
Klibansky, Raymond. "Peter Abailard and Bernard of Clairvaux: A Letter by Abailard." *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 5 (1961): 1–27.
Knowles, David and R. Neville Hadcock. *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*. London, 1971.
Knowles, David and C.N.L. Brooke, ed. *The Heads of Religious Houses. England and Wales*. Vol. 1. Cambridge GB, 2001.
Köpf, Ulrich. *Religiöse Erfahrung in der Theologie Bernhards von Clairvaux*. Tübingen, 1980.
Krailsheimer, A.J. *Rancé and the Trappist Legacy*. Kalamazoo, 1985.
Ladner, Gerhart. "*Homo Viator*: Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order." *Speculum* 42 (1967): 233–259.
Leclercq, Jean. "La voie royale." *Supplément de la vie spirituelle* 7 (1948): 338–352.
——. "Études sur saint Bernard et le texte de ses écrits." AC 9 (1953). 5–247.
——. "Lettres de vocation à la vie monastique." In *Studia Anselmiana* 37. *Analecta Monastica* Third Series. Ed. M.M. Lebreton, Jean Leclercq, C.H. Talbot. Rome, 1955. 169–197.
——. "Mönchtum und Perigrinatio im Frühmittelalter." *Römische Quartalschrift* 55 (1960): 212–255.
——. "Monachisme et pérégrinatio du IXe au XIIe siècle" *Studia Monastica* 3 (1961): 33–52.
——. *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu*. Paris, 1957. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, trans. Catharine Misrahi. New York, 1961. Third edition 1982.
——. "Recherches sur les sermons sur les cantiques." *Recueil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits*. I. Rome, 1962. 175–351.
——. "De quelques procédés du style biblique de S. Bernard." In *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits* III. Rome, 1969. 249–266.
——. "Les premiers écrits de Saint Bernard." *Recueil III*. 343–422.
——. "Les lettres de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry à Saint Bernard." *Revue bénédictine* 79 (1969): 375–91.
——. "Saint Bernard on the Church." *Downside Review* 85 (1967): 274–294.
——. "Were the Sermons on the Song of Songs Delivered in Chapter?" Introduction. Bernard of Clairvaux. *On the Song of Songs II*, trans. Kilian Walsh. Kalamazoo MI, 1976.
——. *Nouveau visage de Bernard de Clairvaux*. Paris, 1976. Trans. *A Second Look at Bernard of Clairvaux*. Kalamazoo MI, 1990.
——. *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France*. Oxford, 1979.
——. "Pour un portrait spirituel de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry." In *Saint-Thierry, une abbaye du Vi^{e} au XXe siècle. Actes du colloque international d'histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry*. Saint-Thierry, 1979. 413–428.
——. "Lettres de Bernard: Histoire ou littérature?" In *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits IV*. Rome, 1987. 125–226.
——. "Essais sur l'esthétique de S. Bernard." *Recueil IV* (as above): 35–77.
——. "Le thème de la jonglerie chez saint Bernard et ses contemporains." and " 'Joculator et saltator.' S. Bernard et l'image du jongleur dans les manuscrits." *Recueil d'études sur saint Bernard et ses écrits* V. Rome, 1992. 347–362 and 363–390.
——. "L'expérience mystique d'après S. Bernard de Clairvaux." In *Recueil* V. Rome, 1992. 403–414.
——. "Toward a Sociological Interpretation of the Various Saint Bernards." In *Bernardus Magister*. Ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo, 1992. 19–33.
——. "Introduction: L'auteur et l'œuvre." In *Galand de Reigny: Parabolaire*. Ed. C. Friedländer, J. Leclercq and G. Raciti. SC 378. Paris, 1992.

——. "La paternité de S. Bernard et les débuts de l'ordre cistercien." *Revue bénédictin* 103 (1993): 445–481.
——. "Saint Bernard and the Beginnings of the Cistercian Order." *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 29 (1994): 379–393.
Lobrichon, Guy. "La Bible des maîtres du XII siècle." In *Bernard de Clairvaux* (as below): 209–236.
Locatelli, René. "L'expansion de l'ordre cistercien." In *Bernard de Clairvaux: histoire, mentalités, spiritualité, Bernard de Clairvaux. Oeuvres complètes*. SC 380. Paris, 1992. 103–140.
Lohse, Bernhard. "Luther und Bernhard von Clairvaux." In Kasper Elm, ed. *Bernhard von Clairvaux* (see above). 271–301.
Louf, André. "Bernard abbé." In *Bernard de Clairvaux: histoire, mentalités, spiritualité.* 348–379. (see above, under Locatelli). 348–379.
Lowther Clark, W.K. *St Gregory of Nyssa. The Life of St. Macrina*. London, 1916.
Lubac, Henri de. *Exégèse médiéval: Les quatre sens de l'Ecriture*, vol. 2. Paris, 1959.
Luddy, Ailbe. *Life and Teaching of Saint Bernard*. Dublin, 1937.
Luscombe, David E. *The School of Peter Abelard*. Cambridge GB, 1969.
Maître, Claire. *La réforme cistercienne du plain-chant: Etudes d'un traité théorique*. Brecht, 1995.
Marosszéki, Soloutor Rodolphe. *Les origines du chant cistercien: Recherches sur les réformes du plain-chant cistercien au XIIe siècle*. Vatican City, 1952. Also in *AC* 8 (1952): 1–179.
Marrou, Henri-Irénée. *Saint Augustin et la Culture Antique*. Paris, 1938. *Retractio* added, 1948.
Matthew, Donald. *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*. Cambridge GB, 1992.
McDonough, Chris J., ed. *The Oxford Poems of Hugh Primas and the Arundel Lyrics*. Toronto, 1984.
——. "Hugh Primas 187: A Poetic Glosula on Amiens, Reims and Peter Abelard." *Speculum* 61 (1986): 806–835.
McGinn, Bernard. *The Growth of Mysticism.* The Presence of God. A History of Western Mysticism, Vol. 2. New York, 1995.
McGuire, Brian Patrick. *Friendship and Community. The Monastic Experience 350–1250*. Kalamazoo MI, 1988. Reprint with new Introduction, Ithaca, NY: 2010.
——. *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition*. Kalamazoo MI, 1991.
——. "A Saint's Afterlife: Bernard in the Golden Legend and in Other Medieval Collections." In *Bernhard von Clairvaux.* ed. Kaspar Elm (see above). 179–211.
——. "Who Founded the Order of Cîteaux?" In *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God. Essays in Honor of Jean Leclercq*. Ed. E. Rozanne Elder. Kalamazoo MI, 1995. 389–413.
——. "Love of Learning: Remembering Jean Leclercq." *The American Benedictine Review* 57 (2006): 41–59.
——. "The Cistercians and the Rise of the Exemplum in Early Thirteenth Century France." Also "The Cistercians and the Transformation of Monastic Friendship." In *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Woman and their Stories, 1100–1250*. Aldershot GB, 2001.
——. "Bernard's Concept of a Cistercian Order: Vocabulary and Context." *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 54 (2003): 225–249.
——. *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation*. University Park PA, 2005.
Merton, Thomas. *The Spirit of Simplicity*. Trappist KY, 1948.
——. *The Last of the Fathers: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the Encyclical Letter: Doctor Mellifluus*. New York, 1954.
——. *Thomas Merton on St. Bernard*. Kalamazoo, 1980. Reprint from *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum* 10 (1948), 11 (1949) and 12 (1950).

Mews, Constant. "The Lists of Heresies Imputed to Peter Abelard." *Revue bénédictine* 95 (1985): 77–108.
——. "Orality, Literacy and Authority in the Twelfth-Century Schools." *Exemplaria* 2 (1990): 475–500.
——. *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard: Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France*. New York, 1999. Second edition 2008.
——. *Abelard and his Legacy*. London, 2001.
——. "The Council of Sens (1141): Abelard, Bernard, the Feat of Social Upheaval." *Speculum* 77 (2002): 342–382.
——. *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard*. Aldershot, 2002.
——. "Liturgy and Identity at the Paraclete: Heloise, Abelard and the Evolution of the Cistercian Reform" and "Liturgy and Monastic Observance in Practice at the Paraclete." In *The Poetic and Musical Legacy of Heloise and Abelard*. Ed. Marc Stewart and David Wulstan. Ottawa, 2003: 19–33 and 100–112.
——. "*Logica* in the Service of Philosophy: William of Champeaux and his Influence." In *Schrift, Schreiber, Schenker: Studien zur Abtei Sankt Viktor zu Paris und zu den Viktorinern*, ed. Rainer Berndt. Berlin, 2005. 77–117.
——. *Abelard and Heloise*. New York, 2005.
——. "Le liber pancrisis, un florilège des pères et des maîtres modernes du XIIe siècle." *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi* 64 (2006): 145–191.
——. "Cicero and the Boundaries of Friendship in the Twelfth Century." *Viator* 38 (2007): 369–384.
——. "William of Champeaux, Abelard and Hugh of Saint-Victor: Platonism, Theology, and Scripture in Early Twelfth-Century France." In *Bibel und Exegese in Sankt Viktor zu Paris: Formen und Funktionen eines Grundtextes in europäischem Rahmen*. Ed. Rainer Berndt. Münster, 2009. 118–152.
——. "Robert d'Arbrissel, Roscelin et Abélard."*Revue Mabillon* 20 (2009): 33–54.
Michaud, E. *Guillaume de Champeaux et les écoles de Paris au XIIe siècle*. Paris, 1867.
Mohrmann, Christine. *"Observations sur la langue et style de Saint Bernard."* In *Etudes sur le Latin des chrétiens*, vol. 2. Rome, 1961. 354–367. Also in SBO 2: ix–xxxiii.
Moore, R.I. *The Birth of Popular Heresy*. London, 1975.
Mouroux, Jean. "Sur les critères de l'expérience spirituelle d'après des Sermons sur le Cantique des Cantiques." AC 9 (1953): 253–267.
Musso, Jean-Michel. "L'abbaye de Clairvaux." *Les monuments historiques* 145 (1986): 12–18.
Nef, Frédéric. "*Caritas dat caritatem*: La métaphysique de la charité dans les Sermons sur le Cantique des cantiques et l'ontologie de la contemplation." In *Saint Bernard et la Philosophie*, ed. Rémi Brague. Paris, 1993. 87–108.
Norris, Richard A., Jr., ed. *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*. Grand Rapids MI, 2003.
Norton, Christopher and David Park. *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*. Cambridge GB, 1986.
Norton, Christopher. *Saint William of York*. Woodbridge, Suffolk GB. 2006.
Noy, David. *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers*. London, 2000.
Ohly, Friedrich. *Hohelied-Studien: Grundzüger einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200*. Wiesbaden, 1958.
Oldoni, Massimo. "Bernardo scrittore: le *Parabolae*." In *Bernardo Cisterciense: Atti del XXVI Convegno storico internazionale*. Spoleto, 1990. 291–301.
Oort, Johannes van. *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's "City of God" and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*. Leiden, 1991.
Oursel, Charles. *La miniature du XIIe siècle à l'abbaye de Cîteaux d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Dijon*. Dijon, 1926.
——. *Miniatures cisterciennes: Á l'abbaye de Cîteaux au temps du second abbé saint Étienne Harding (1109–34)*. Macon, 1960.

Palmer, Nigel. "*Simul cantemus, simul pausemus*: Zur mittelalterlichen Zisterzienser-interpunktion." In *Leservorgänge. Prozesse des Erkennens in mittelalterlichen Texten, Bildern und Handschriften*. Ed. Martina Backes, Eckart Conrad Lutz, and Stefan Matter. Zürich, 2010.
Phillips, Jonathan. *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom*. New Haven CT, 2007.
Picard, André. *La thaumaturgie de Bernard de Clairvaux d'après les* Vitae. Montreal, 1991.
Piehler, Paul. *The Visionary Landscape*. London, 1971.
Places, Édouard des. *Syngeneia: La parenté de l'homme avec Dieu d'Homère à la patristique*. Paris, 1964. 83–85.
Posset, Franz. "The Crucified Embraces Saint Bernard: The Beginnings of the *Amplexus Domini*." CSQ 33 (1998): 289–314.
Pra', Laura Dal. *Cronologia della vita di S. Bernardo di Clairvaux*. Casamari, Italy: 1990.
Pranger, M.B. *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams*. Leiden, 1994.
Rava, Eva Carlotta. *Caída del hombre y retorno a la verdad en los primeros tratados de San Bernardo de Claraval*. Burenos Aires, 1986.
Reilly, Diane. "Picturing the Monastic Drama: Romanesque Bible Illustrations of the Song of Songs." *Word and Image* 17 (2001): 389–400.
Reuter, Timothy. "Zur Annerkennung Papst Innocenz II." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 39 (1983): 395–416.
Rosier-Catach, Irène. "Abélard et les grammairiens: sur le verbe substantif et la prédication." *Vivarium* 41 (2003): 176–248.
Rudolph, Conrad. "The 'Principal Founders' and the Early Artistic Legislation at Cîteaux." In *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture* 3. Kalamazoo, 1987. 8–18.
——. *Artistic Change at St.-Denis: Abbot Suger's Program and the Early Twelfth-Century Controversy over Art*. Princeton NJ, 1990.
——. *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's* Apologia *and the Medieval Attitude Towards Art*. Philadelphia PA, 1990.
——. *Violence and Daily Life. Reading, Art and Polemics in the Cîteaux* Moralia in Job. Princeton NJ, 1997.
Sabersky, Dorette. "The Compositional Structure of Bernard's Eighty-Fifth Sermon on the Song of Songs." In *Goad and Nail*. Ed. E. Rozanne Elder. Kalamazoo, 1985. 86–108.
——."*Affectus Confessus sum et non Negavi*: Reflections on the Expression of Affect in the 26th Sermon on the Song of Songs of Bernard of Clairvaux." In *The Joy of Learning* (see above under "Elder"). 187–216.
Sabersky-Bascho, Dorette. *Studien zur Paronomasie bei Bernhard von Clairvaux*. Freiburg, 1979.
Simson, Otto von. *The Gothic Cathedral. Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*. New York, 1962.
Smalley, Beryl. Review of Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France*. In *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980): 108–110.
Smith, L. M. *The Early History of the Monastery of Cluny*. Oxford, 1920.
Sommerfeldt, John R. "Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux." *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters* 46 (1961): 493–501.
——. "Bernard of Clairvaux and Scholasticism." *Papers of the Michigan Academy* 48 (1963): 265–277.
——. *The Spiritual Teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux*. Kalamazoo, 1991.
——. *Bernard of Clairvaux On the Life of the Mind*. New York, 2004.
——. *Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Spirituality of Relationship*. New York, 2004.
Stalley, Roger. *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*. London and New Haven Conn, 1987.
Stercal, Claudio, *Il "medius adventus": Saggio di lettura degli scritti di Bernardo di Clairvaux*. Rome, 1992.

Stiegman, Emero. "Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, the Victorines." In *The Medieval Theologians*. Ed. G.R. Evans. Oxford, 2001. 129–155.
Stroll, Mary. *The Jewish Pope: Ideology and Politics in the Papal Schism of 1130*. Leiden, 1987.
Talbot, Charles Hugh. "The Cistercian Attitude towards Art: The Literary Evidence." *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*. Ed. Christopher Norton and David Park. Cambridge GB, 1986. 56–64.
Thomson, Rodney M. "The Satirical Works of Berengar of Poitiers: An Edition with Introduction." *Mediaeval Studies* 42 (1980): 89–138.
Timmermann, Waltraud. *Studien zur allegorischen Bildlichkeit den Parabolae Bernhards von Clairvaux*. Frankfurt am Main, 1982.
Turner, Denys. *Eros and Allegory. Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*. Kalamazoo MI, 1995.
Upsher Smith, Richard. "Arnold of Bonneval, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bernard's Epistle 310." *AC* 49 (1993): 273–318.
Vacandard, Elphège. "Chronologie abelardienne: La date du concile de Sens: 1140." *Revue des questions historiques* 50 (1891): 235–245.
——. *Vie de Saint Bernard,* 2 vols. Paris 1895. Fourth edition 1910. The Third edition from 1902 is now reproduced and available on public domain (Paperbackshop.co.uk).
Vanderputten, Stephen. "A Time of Great Confusion: Second Generation Cluniac Reformers and their Resistance to the Monastic Centralization in the Country of Flanders, c. 1125–45." *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 102 (2007): 47–75.
Van Engen, John. "Rupert of Deutz and William of Saint-Thierry." *Revue bénédictine* 93 (1983): 327–336.
——. *Rupert of Deutz*. Berkeley CA, 1983.
Vauchez, André. *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*. Cambridge GB, 1997.
Verbaal, Wim. "Realités quotidiennes et fiction littéraire dans les *Sermons sur le Cantique* de Bernard de Clairvaux." *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 51 (2000): 201–218.
——. "The Council of Sens Reconsidered: Masters, Monks or Judges?" *Church History* 74 (2005): 460–493.
——. "Bernard of Clairvaux's School of Oblivion." In *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*. Ed. M.B. Bruun and S. Glaser. Turnhout, 2008. 221–237.
Von Moos, Peter. *Hildebert von Lavardin 1056–1133*. Stuttgart, 1965.
——. *Consolatio: Studien zur Mittellateinischen Trostlitteratur über den Tod und zum Problem der christlichen Trauer*. 4 vols., Munich, 1971–72
——. *Geschichte als Topik: Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die Historiae im 'Policraticus' Johannes von Salisbury*. Hildesheim, 1988.
——. *Entre histoire et littérature: Communication et culture au Moyen Age*. Florence, 2005.
Waddell, Chrysogonus. "The Origin and Early Evolution of the Cistercian Antiphonary: Reflections on Two Cistercian Chant Reforms." In *The Cistercian Spirit*. Ed. M. Basil Pennington. Spencer Mass., 1970. 190–223.
——. "The Early Cistercian Experience of the Liturgy." In *Rule and Life: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*. Ed. Basil Pennington. Spencer Mass., 1971. 77–116.
——. "Saint Bernard and the Cistercian Office at the Abbey of the Paraclete." In *The Chimaera of his Age: Studies on Bernard of Clairvaux*. Ed. E. Rozanne Elder and John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo, 1980. 76–121.
——. *The Twelfth-Century Hymnal*. Vol. 1. *Cistercian Liturgy* 1. Trappist KY, 1984.
——. *Two Early Cistercian "Libelli Missarum": Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS 2300, ff. 85b–122v; Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 310, ff. 76r–97v*. *Cistercian Liturgy* 19. Trappist KY, 1991. See also http://www.wmich.edu/library/digi/collections/liturgy/series/
——. "The Clairvaux Saint Bernard Office: Ikon of a Saint." In *Bernardus Magister*. Ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo, 1991. 381–427.

——. "Merton of Gethsemani and Bernard of Clairvaux." *The Merton Annual* 5 (1992): 95–130.
——. "The Myth of Cistercian Origins: C.H. Berman and the Manuscript Sources." *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 51 (2000): 299–386.
Williams, Watkin. *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*. Manchester GB, 1935; Westminster MD, 1952.
Wilmart, André. "La série et la date des ouvrages of Guillaume de Saint-Thierry." *Revue Mabillon* 14 (1924): 157–167.
——. "La série et la date des ouvrages de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry." *Revue Mabillon* 14 (1924): 157–167.
Zaluska, Yolanta. *L'enluminure et le scriptorium de Cîteaux au XIIe siècle*. Cîteaux, 1989.
Zenker, B. *Die Mitglieder des Kardinalkollegiums von 1130–1159*. Dissertation. Universität Würzburg, 1964.
Zerbi, Pietro. *"Philosophi" e "logici": un ventennio di incontri e scontri: Soissons, Sens, Cluny, 1121–41*. Milan, 2002.

INDEX

Abbey of Gethsemani, 347, 348, 349, 369
abbots
  status of, 341
Abelard, Peter, 135–136, 148, 245, 303
  analytical and logical orientation of, 8, 134, 369, 370
  Anthropologia, 156
  Apologia contra Bernardum, 160, 165, 166
  on Cistercian liturgy, 153
  condemnation by Council of Soissons, 120, 136, 146, 159, 165
  Confessio fidei "Universis", 160
  conflict with Bernard, 244–245
    charges against Abelard, 121, 162, 163, 164, 165
    condemnation by Council of Sens, 6, 7, 48–49, 122, 159, 160, 161, 166–167, 168
    Letter 190 to Innocent II, 2, 7, 133–134, 160, 164, 165
    political tensions influencing, 135, 136, 138–139, 160
    William of Saint Thierry's role in, 6, 120–122, 126–127, 162
  Ethica, 156
  and Heloise, 143–145, 152
  Historia calamitatum, 6, 48–49, 136, 144, 146n27, 148, 155
  liber sententiarum, 158, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165
  on omnipotence, 147, 161, 162, 165
  and the Paraclete, 148, 152, 153–154, 303
  on Redemption, 7, 162, 163–164
  sententie, 157
  Sic et Non, 144, 150, 151, 156, 157, 161
  similarities with Bernard, 6–7
  teaching theology, 136, 137, 145, 149–150, 155
  Theologia, 7, 120, 159, 161, 162, 165, 167–168
  Theologia Christiana, 148, 150, 151
  Theologia 'Scholarium', 151, 156, 157, 158, 162–163, 164, 166
  Theologia 'Summi boni', 145
  on Trinity, 7, 145–146, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165
  and William of Champeaux, 6, 135, 137, 143
Action and Contemplation in St Bernard (Thomas Merton), 360
De administratione (Suger of Saint Denis), 304
adornment
  personal, 291–293
Aelred of Rievaulx, 49, 340, 346, 349–350
  Speculum caritatis, 303, 310, 340
  style in preaching and sermons, 86, 87, 90
affectus, 93, 372
affiliations of Clairvaux, 198–199, 217–219*tab*
Alan of Auxerre
  Vita Secunda, 19
Alberic of Cîteaux, 283
Alberic of Reims, 52, 146, 147, 148, 156n48, 157
Alcobaça, 331
Aleth de Montbard, 22–23, 24–25, 27, 330
Alexander III, 307
Alexander of Lincoln, 173, 175–176
Alexander (prior of Fountains), 201
altarpieces
  portrayals of Bernard on, 320, 326, 330, 335, 336
Alvisus of Arras, 183–185
Ambrose of Milan, 126, 150, 154, 222, 240, 282
De amicitia (Cicero), 144
amor vs *caritas*, 128, 141, 159
the *Amplexus*, 15, 64, 325–329, 335, 341–342, 346
Anacletus II, 18, 40, 48, 151, 160
  sympathizers of, 41, 42, 46, 161, 214
Anchin, 183, 184, 185, 309, 311*ill.*, 340
Andrew (brother of Bernard), 22, 27, 43, 51
De anima (C.H. Talbot), 349–350
animus vagabundus, 275
Anselm of Canterbury, 136, 156, 163, 170
  Cur Deus homo, 2
Anselm of Laon, 146, 157, 163
  sententie, 141

Anthropologia (Peter Abelard), 156
anthropology, 96, 129, 275, 350, 371
antiphonaries
  portrayals of Bernard in, 315–317
Antiphonary
  revision of, 73–74, 353
Apologia (Peter Abelard), 160, 165, 166
Apologia to Abbot William, 67, 98, 119, 279–281, 284, 286, 290, 294, 296, 297, 340
  motivation behind, 14, 34, 280, 287, 289, 303–304, 308n16
  William of Saint Thierry's role in, 123, 280n3
  writing style, 67, 298
Aquitaine, 18, 40, 42, 51, 55
architecture, 281, 290–292. *See also* buildings
Ardutius of Geneva, 190
Argenteuil, 145, 151
Arnold of Brescia, 48n153, 52, 59, 160–162, 167
Arnold of Morimond, 35, 275
Arouca, 315, 316*ill.*
Arrouaise, 139, 187
Ars poetica (Horace), 242
art. *See also Apologia to Abbot William*
  appreciation of, 282, 296–298
  artistic legislation of Cîteaux, 280–281, 286, 287–288, 289, 290, 303, 312, 319–320
  condemnation of excessive, 14, 64, 279–280, 284, 290, 295–296
  in and for work, 299–300, 301, 302
In ascensione, 12, 233–234, 256n19, 355–356
asceticism, 16, 31, 33, 97, 244, 256n18, 269, 343, 369
In assumptione Mariae, 277
attraction, power of, 81–84
Aubé, Pierre, 55
Auberger, Jean-Baptiste, 252, 281n6
Auerbach, Erich
  on Dante, 231–232
  figura, 12, 222, 228–230, 232, 235, 237, 243
  Mimesis, 236
Augustine of Canterbury, 152
Augustine of Hippo, 95–96, 99, 147, 150, 177–178, 212, 222, 267, 371–372
  Confessions, 25, 240
  De civitate Dei, 257, 258
  De haeresibus, 164
  Enarrationes in psalmos, 286
  Opuscula, 297n72
Aulps, 10, 98, 198–199, 200, 205
Aurelian of Réomé, 353
austerity, 97, 98, 286, 339, 340

Babylon, 249–250, 257–260, 264
Baldwin of Noyon, 66
Baldwin of Pisa, 204, 209
Baldwin of Rieti, 213–214, 216
Bamberg, Diet of, 44
baptism, 51, 149, 150
Bartholomew (brother of Bernard), 12, 22, 71–72, 212, 217
Bautier, Robert-Henri, 136, 137n8
Beaupré, 315
begging letters, 189–192
Ben-Meier, Josuah, 357
Benedict, Brother, 181–183
benefactors, 189–192, 199
Berengar of Poitiers, 76, 167
Berman, Constance, 9, 31n71, 139n15, 289n41
Bernard of Clairvaux
  death of, 60, 306–307, 351–352, 352–353, 361
  as father abbot, 8–11, 29–33
  friendship with William of Saint Thierry, 5–6, 31, 110–111, 116–119. *See also* William of Saint Thierry
  illness, 31–32, 36, 37, 59, 60, 112, 140, 172
  last years, 58–61
  novitiate, 26–28, 139, 281, 283, 285, 286, 298, 300
  origins and youth, 21–26
  personality, 29–30, 65–84, 131
  public role, 33–40, 67, 68, 72, 206, 305. *See also* Abelard, Peter; papal schism
    in controversies and disputes, 3, 39–42, 45–46, 48–52, 50, 51–52, 60
    in Second Crusade, 3, 38, 52–55, 64, 155, 292, 364
  theology of, 24, 33, 64, 91–94, 94–107, 130
  works *See* letters; sermons; works
Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought (Burcht Pranger), 13
Bernardo Paganelli, 51, 210
Bernon of Constance, 353
Bertrada de Montfort, 145

Bérulle, Pierre de, 370
bishoprics
  offered to Bernard, 47, 342
Bledzow, 318
Boethius, 123n90, 143
Boixe, 190–191
Bonmont, 190
Books of Hours, 338
Bredero, Adriaan, 21, 23, 60, 169n2, 288, 305
  on Bernard and William of Saint Thierry, 110n12, 111n18, 122, 123
Bruno of Chiaravalle, 213
Bruun, Mette B., 13, 17
buildings
  at Cîteaux, 281, 286
  at Clairvaux, 43, 293–294, 340
Buildwas, 318
Burchard of Balerne, 114
Bynum, Caroline Walker, 216

Cahn, Walter, 297
Calixtus II, 146
Cambron, 315, 317
canonization, 306, 307, 309, 313
Cantum quem, 353
capitula (General Chapter decisions), 288
Capitula Haeresum XIV, 164–165
caritas vs *amor*, 128, 141, 159
Carmelite mystics, 362
Carta caritatis (Stephen Harding), 31, 36, 92, 205, 206, 213
Casey, Michael, 2, 3–5, 14–15, 25, 139
Catherine, Saint, 323
Ceglar, Stanislaus, 108n1, 123
Celestine II, 50, 151, 161
Certosa, 336
Châlons-sur-Marne, 39, 50, 109, 110, 139, 140, 142, 342
chant, Cistercian, 72–74, 353–355
chant, Gregorian, 353, 354
charisma, 18, 42–43–110
Charles de Croy, 326
Chartres, 58
Châtillon, 24, 27–28, 118, 285, 313, 331
Chautard, Jean-Baptiste, 360
Cherlieu, 199
Chiaravalle, 44, 196, 213
Church
  view on society and, 372
church buildings, 43, 70, 293, 294–295, 340
Ci nous dit, 331
Cicero
  De amicitia, 144
  De inventione, 143
  De Senectute, 174
Cistercian Order, 3, 12, 36, 97, 200. *See also Exordium magnum Cisterciense*; monastic reform
  abbatial elections, 200–203
  Antiphonary, 352, 353–354
  artistic legislation, 280–281, 286, 287–288, 289, 290, 303, 312, 319–320
  chant, 72–74, 353–355
  constitution. *See Carta caritatis*
  evolution of, 197, 339, 340, 346, 359
  Exordium cistercii, 140n15, 288
  Exordium parvum, 92, 340
  General Chapter, 11, 200, 203–207, 288
  hymnary, 355
  Instituta Generalis Capituli, 186, 206, 213, 284
  liturgy, 153
  visitations, 200, 203, 205, 206
Cistercian Studies Conference, 2, 16, 356–357, 363
Cîteaux, 26–27, 35, 118, 148, 244. *See also* Cistercian Order
  artistic legislation, 280–281, 286, 287–288, 289, 290, 303, 312, 319–320
  novitiate at, 26–28, 136, 139, 281, 283, 285, 286, 298, 300
  scriptorium, 281–285, 302, 307, 312
civitas Dei, 257
civitas Domini, 258
civitas terrena, 257, 267
De civitate Dei (Augustine of Hippo), 257, 258
Clairvaux, 140n15, 148, 169
  absence of Bernard from, 43, 45, 115, 206, 208–209
  establishment of, 29, 139, 140
  foundations and affiliations of, 139, 169, 170, 192–198, 217–219tab, 293–294
  recreation of monastery complex, 43–44, 69–71, 114n35, 115, 293, 340
Clairvaux Bible, 297
Clairvaux III, 340
Clanchy, Michael, 49
Clark, Lowther, 220
clerical schooling, 134–135
clothing, 340

Cluny, 34, 111–112, 340. *See also Apologia to Abbot William*
  Abelard at, 49
  art at, 64, 287, 295, 307
  material excesses of, 119, 280, 295
  observances at, 119, 123, 244
  and Robert of Châtillon, 9, 34–35, 120, 120n70, 178–179
collaboration, 72–74
Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum (journal), 359, 360
Commentarius in Cantica canticorum e Scriptis Ambrosii collectus (William of Saint Thierry), 126n107
Conan III, 213
Conferences (John Cassian), 110
Confessio fidei "Universis" (Peter Abelard), 160
Confessions (Augustine of Hippo), 240
Cono of Palestrina, 139, 146
Conrad III, 54, 55
Conrad of Eberbach
  Exordium magnum Cisterciense, 43, 60, 74–75, 296, 307, 325, 329, 336, 367
De consecratione (Suger of Saint Denis), 304
Consolatio (Peter von Moos), 240
Constable, Giles, 126n112, 170
On Contemplating God (William of Saint Thierry), 124
contemplation, 65, 104–107, 360, 369
Contra Jovinianum (Jerome), 148
controversies
  doctrinal, 48–52, 55, 56, 94
conversion, 103–104
De conversione, 90, 160
Corbeil, 136
cosmology, 371
Council of Reims, 57, 146
Council of Sens, 6, 7, 48, 122, 134, 159, 160, 161, 166–167, 168
Council of Soissons, 120, 136, 146, 159, 165
Council of Troyes, 38
croziers, 340–341
Crusades. *See* Second Crusade
Cur Deus homo (Anselm), 2

Dal Prà, Laura, 24n34
Dante, 220, 231–232, 335
  Paradiso, 335
daughter houses
  of Clairvaux, 139, 169, 170, 176, 179, 192–198, 217–219tab, 293–294
David, King of Scotland, 198
Davy, Marie-Madeleine, 108n1
Déchanet, Jean-Marie, 108n1
In dedicatione ecclesiae, 263, 277
depression, 29–30
desire for God, 94–97
devil, 335–339
dialectics, 16, 91, 94, 123, 133, 142, 143, 166, 168, 370
Dialogue between a Cluniac and a Cistercian (Idung of Prüfening), 303
Dieric Bouts, 336
Diet of Bamberg, 44
Diet of Frankfurt, 54, 55
The Difficult Saint (McGuire, Brian Patrick), 4, 12, 21, 239, 305
dilectio, 128
De diligendo Deo (On Loving God), 47, 99, 100, 107, 128, 225–226
Dinzelbacher, Peter, 23n28
discipline, 12, 30, 43, 97–99, 149, 307
Disputatio catholicorum patrum contra Petrum Abaelardum, 165
disputes
  role in, 3, 39–42, 45–46, 48–52
Distinguish to Unite; or, The Degrees of Knowledge (Jacques Maritain), 359
De diversis, 66, 90, 252, 255, 259, 271
De divinis officiis (Rupert of Deutz), 126
Doctor of the Church, 62, 361
Doctor Mellifluus (Pius XII), 361
Doctrina, 335
doctrinal controversies. *See also* Abelard, Peter; papal schism
  involvement in, 48–52, 55, 56
Dodo, Brother, 187
Donough O'Carroll (king of Uriel), 194
Doyle, Kathleen, 14, 280n2, 286n27, 289
Drogo de Champagne, 112n22, 180–181, 217
Dumontier, Pierre, 255
Dunes, 198–199, 208

Ecclesia, 300–302
ecclesiastical reform, 136, 139
Edessa, 52
Edward the Confessor, 307
Egypt, 257, 260–264, 350
Elder, E. Rozanne, 5–6
elections
  involvement in, 10, 11, 46, 49–50, 59, 200–203, 205–206
Elias (monk), 176–177
emotion, 239, 240

Enarrationes in psalmos (Augustine of Hippo), 286
The Enigma of Faith (William of Saint Thierry), 127
In epiphania domini sermo, 266–267
Erasmus, 336, 339, 345
Erenagh, 194
Ernald of Bonneval, 44, 60, 127
  Vita Prima, 18, 40, 42, 323
Eskil of Lund, 59–60
Espina, 199
Esrum, 59, 326
Etampes, 40, 54
Ethica (Peter Abelard), 156
Eudes, Jean, 370
Eugenius III, 55, 57, 60, 215, 345, 361–362
  and Crusades, 52, 55, 58
  elevation of, 291–292
  and Gilbert of Poitiers, 55, 122n86
  letters to, 3, 11, 192, 205, 214–215
  revolt against, 51, 52, 161
event (concept), 230
Evervin (provost), 51
Excerpta in libris S. Gregorii papae super Cantica canticorum (William of Saint Thierry), 126n107
Exodus, 261–264
exorcisms, 336
Exordium Cistercii, 31, 140n15, 288
Exordium magnum Cisterciense (Conrad of Eberbach), 43, 60, 74–75, 296, 307, 325, 329, 336, 367
Exordium parvum, 92, 340
Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos (William of Saint Thierry), 126n108
Exposition on the Song of Songs (William of Saint Thierry), 116, 126n109, 129
Eynde, Damian Van den, 171

falsa laetitia, 31
felix regio, 250, 251
figura, 243
  about, 228–230, 232
  persona and, 12, 236–237
  use of, 12, 222, 234–236, 237, 238, 247
figural representations, 284, 307
First Life of Bernard. *See Vita prima Bernardi*
First Style (house style of Cîteaux), 283, 286
Five Books on Consideration, 14, 58, 291–292, 345
Flay, 181–183, 188, 217
Florence, 335
Foigny, 9, 33, 185, 207, 308
Fontenay, 32, 195, 294
Fontevraud, 145
forma perfectior, 234, 235
The Form of Preaching (Robert of Basevorn), 5, 89, 225, 226, 233, 243, 248
foundations. *See* daughter houses
Fountains, 176, 192, 198
  abbatial elections, 10, 49, 201–202, 205
Fragmenta (*Via Tertia*) (Geoffrey of Auxerre), 19, 173
France, James, 14
Frankfurt, Diet of, 55
free choice, 38, 47
Freiburg Cathedral, 15, 320
Frijda, Nico, 240
Frowin, Abbot, 54
Fulbert of Chartres, 15, 143, 299, 329
Fulk, 99, 179, 267n51
Furness, 194

G., brother, 209–210
Galo, Bishop, 136
Gastaldelli, Ferruccio, 123
Gaudry (uncle of Bernard), 37
General Chapter, 31n72, 57, 89, 93, 200, 203–207, 288, 360, 365
  artistic legislation promulgated by, 298, 320
  attitude towards, 11, 205, 215
  on Bernard's illness, 31, 140
  on reform of chant, 72–73
Genoa, 41, 342
Geoffrey I, 109n9
Geoffrey of Ainai, 198
Geoffrey of Auxerre, 3, 51, 55, 164, 168, 277
  on care for others, 79–81
  on controversies and disputes, 3, 21, 34–35, 44, 50, 55, 60, 161, 168
  Fragmenta (*Via Tertia*), 19, 173
  on healings and miracles, 52n169, 54
  Sermo in anniversario obitus S. Bernardi, 79–81
  on size of Clairvaux, 169
  Vita Prima, 18–19, 306, 312, 313, 322, 323
Geoffrey of Chartres, 18n3, 121, 158, 159
Geoffrey of Clairvaux, 127n117
Geoffrey of Péronne, 176, 216

Gerard of Clairvaux, 22, 27, 112
illness, 45, 76, 273–274
lament over death of, 12, 46, 76, 238–243
as practical advisor to Bernard, 69, 77–78
sermon *26* on, 4, 13, 46, 76–78, 77–78, 223, 238, 240–241, 273–274
Gerhard von den Berg, 339
Gerson, Jean, 47
Gervase, Abbot of Arrouaise, 187
Gethsemani, Abbey of Our Lady of, 347, 348, 349, 369
Ghellinck, Joseph de, 122
Gilbert of Poitiers (Gilbert de la Porrée), 55, 56, 88, 122n86, 123, 135n5, 164, 168, 306
Gilbert of Swineshead, 89
Gilbert the Universal, 156n48
Gilduin of Saint Victor, 147
Gilson, Etienne, 13
The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, 20, 224, 251–252, 349
Glosule, 142–143
Godfrey of Langres, 308
Godwin, 183
Golden Legend (*Legenda Aurea*, James of Voragine), 28, 36, 322–325, 326, 329, 330, 341, 346
The Golden Epistle (William of Saint Thierry), 6, 127, 128
Goswin of Cîteaux, 205
Goswin of Douai, 138, 142–143
grace, 38, 102, 104, 106, 349
Grâce-Dieu, 203
On Grace and Free Choice (Bernard of Clairvaux), 38, 123
De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae (The Steps of Humility and Pride), 3, 30, 98, 103, 254, 268, 275, 308, 310, 313
Grammatical Institutes (Priscian), 142
Grandselve, 199
Gregorian chant, 353, 354
Gregorian University (Rome), 364
Gregory VII, 39, 97
Gregory the Great, 95, 96, 126, 152
Gregory of Nyssa
The Life of Nyssa, 220
Guarinus of Sion, 201
Guerric of Igny, 83, 86, 87, 93, 350, 357, 359
Gui of Castello, 151, 161
Guido of Arezzo, 353
Guigo, 99
Guy, Cardinal, 52
Guy (brother of Bernard), 22, 27, 28, 37
Guy of Montiéramey, 73
Guy of Trois Fontaines, 11, 71, 209, 210, 211–212

habits, 340, 341
De haeresibus (Augustine of Hippo), 164
Haimeric (papal chancellor), 39, 47, 209
Hautecombe, 190
healings, 18, 54, 60, 307
Hedwig Codex, 343, 344*ill.*
Hedwig of Silensia, 343
Heilsbronn, 326
Heinrich I, 358
Heisterbach, 342
Heller, Dagmar, 264
Heloise
and Abelard, 143–145, 152
and the Paraclete, 151–152, 154
Henri Sanglier, 160
Henry I, 189
Henry V, 44
Henry, Prince, 297
Henry of Bavaria, 45
Henry, Bishop of Verdun, 39
Henry of Clairvaux, 330
Henry de Lubac, 227
Henry (disciple of Peter of Bruys), 51
Henry Murdac, 10, 49–50, 201, 202, 203, 205
letter to, 173–174, 178, 184
Henry of Sens, 98, 121
Herbert of Clairvaux
Liber miraculorum, 15, 74, 325
Herbert of Igny, 4
heresy, 55
in Aquitaine, 51–52, 317–318
charges to Abelard, 121, 162, 163, 164, 165
hic et nunc, 250
High Primas, 147
Hildebert of Lavardin, 223
Hildegard of Bingen, 57
Himmerod, 195
Historia calamitatum (Peter Abelard), 6, 48–49, 136, 144, 146n27, 148, 155
Historia ecclesiastica, 145
Historia pontificalis (John of Salisbury), 89n61
Holdsworth, Christopher, 8–12, 18n3, 32, 37
Hombeline (sister of Bernard), 22, 25

Homilies in Praise of the Virgin Mary, 24, 32
Honorius Augustodunensis, 300
Horace
  Ars poetica, 242
Hugh (novice at Le Miroir), 11, 207–208, 216
Hugh of Ostia, 202
Hugh of Pontigny, 180–181
Hugh of Rouen, 192
Hugh of Saint Victor, 7, 146, 149–150
  De sacramentis, 155, 156, 157
  Sententie de divinitate, 156
Hugh of Vitry, 59
Humbert of Igny, 10, 57, 74–76, 265
humility, 254, 371
humour, 66–67
Hyacinth Bobbone, 48n153, 161, 167
hymnary
  Cistercian, 355

"I", 222, 226, 227, 233, 237, 244, 245, 248
Idung of Prüfening
  Dialogue between a Cluniac and a Cistercian, 303
Igny, 200–201
illness, 31–32, 33, 36, 37, 59, 60, 112, 140, 172
illumination. *See* manuscript decoration
illustrations. *See* manuscript decoration
imago Dei, 96
In ascenzione, 12, 233–234
In epiphania domini sermo, 266–267
In Praise of the New Knighthood, 14, 38, 291
In Praise of the Virgin Mother, 107, 292, 299
In resurrectione sermo, 247–248
Innocent II, 44, 48, 50, 52, 151, 194, 197, 214
  and Abelard, 2, 7, 133–134, 160, 164, 165, 167, 168
  and Anacletus, 18, 40–42, 45, 46, 76, 95n81, 115, 193
Innocent III, 366
innovation, 98, 152, 153
inspections. *See* visitations
Instituta Generalis Capituli, 186, 206, 213, 284
Institutes (John Cassian), 110, 371
interior "I", 222, 226, 227, 233, 237, 244, 245, 248
De inventione (Cicero), 143
Isaac of Stella, 4, 81, 82–83, 87, 350
Italy
  travels in, 3, 18, 40, 41–42, 44–46, 200–201, 204, 208
Ivo of Chartres, 136

Jaeger, C. Stephen, 127n112
James, Bruno Scott, 57, 171, 358
James, Dom, 348
James of Voragine
  Legenda Aurea, 322–325, 326, 329, 330, 341, 346
Jean de Vignay, 322, 326
Jerome, Saint, 222, 323
  Contra Jovinianum, 148
Jerusalem, 52, 249–250, 257–260, 291
Jerusalem Bible, 351
Jews, 53, 357–359
Jocelyn of Vierzy, 138n11
John, Brother, 187
John of Buzay, 213
John Cassian, 105
  Conferences, 110
  Institutes, 110, 371
John Cotto, 353
John of the Cross, 360, 362, 363
John of Forde, 89, 95n81
John the Hermit
  Vita Quarta, 19, 22
John of Salisbury, 56, 83, 88–89, 167, 215
Joranus of Saint Nicaise, 127, 180, 181
Joscelin of Soissons, 167
Joscelin of Vierzy, 156n48

Kedar, 267–268, 273
Kienzle, Beverly Mayne, 171
Kleiner, Sighard, 361
knowledge, 371
Knud Lavard, 307

La Crête, 209–210
La Ferté, 26, 139
La Trappe, 369
the *lactactio*, 15, 64, 329–335, 333*ill.*, 334*ill.*, 336, 346
Lambert, Brother, 187
lament
  over death of Gerard, 12, 46, 76, 238–243
Langres, 46–47, 139, 342
Laon, 58
Lateran Council, Second (1139), 48, 121n82, 160, 214

L'Aumône, 215
Lawrence of Durham, 156
Le Miroir, 207
Leclercq, Jean, 32, 134, 170, 216, 252, 305, 367, 373
The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, 17, 85
on monastic theology, 24, 91
Opera Sancti Bernardi, 20, 171n4
Receuil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits, 222
Saint Bernard Mystique, 364
on writing style of Bernard, 88, 221, 224
lectio, 3, 33
lectio divina, 93, 106
Legenda Aurea (*Golden Legend*, James of Voragine), 28, 36, 322–325, 326, 329, 330, 341, 346
legislation, 280–281, 286, 287–288, 289, 290, 303, 312, 319–320
Leo the Great, 356
Leonius of Anchin, 184–185
Leroquais, Victor, 338
Letter to the Brothers of Mont-Dieu (*The Golden Epistle*, William of Saint Thierry), 6, 127, 128
Letter to the Romans (Paul), 359
letters (Bernard of Clairvaux), 59, 170–171, 219*tab*
on abbatial elections, 200–203
on Abelard, 133, 149, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165
to affiliated and daughter houses, 170, 198–199
on Crusades, 53, 58, 262–263
on General Chapter, 203–207
on Jews, 358
on love, 99
on new foundations, 192–198
on own character, 71–72, 246, 305
on papal schism, 40, 41, 48
pastoral, 207–215, 308
to patrons and benefactors, 189–192
portrayals of Bernard in, 310, 311*ill.*, 318
recruitment, 147, 172–192, 188, 216, 217, 259
on reform of Cistercian chant, 73
on reform of Saint Denis, 149, 295–296
on revolt against Eugenius III, 51, 52
to Robert, 120n70, 177, 178–179
Sententiae, 66
style of, 66, 215–216
on visitations, 203
Liber miraculorum (Herbert of Clairvaux), 15, 74, 325
liber sententiarum (Peter Abelard), 158, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165
library of Cîteaux, 282, 285
Liesborn, 319
Life of William, 109
The Life of Macrina (Gregory of Nyssa), 220
literary qualities and techniques. *See* writing style
liturgical plates, 281n6, 287, 288
Lives of the Fathers, 110
Lives of Saints, 326
logica, 142
Lorraine, Duchess of, 195, 197
Lothar of Germany, 42, 44, 195
Lotulf of Novara, 146
Louis VI, 41, 136, 137, 138, 155, 204
Louis VII, 47, 50, 54, 55, 155, 197
Louis, Father. *See* Merton, Thomas
love
Bernard on, 99–102, 128, 129, 144
William of Saint Thierry on, 141, 159
The Love of Learning and the Desire for God (Jean Leclercq), 17, 85
On Loving God (*De diligendo Deo*), 47, 99, 100, 107, 128, 225–226
Lower Rhine Master, 332, 333*ill.*
Lubiaz, 317
Lucius II, 50, 161
Luddy, Ailbe, 348, 349
Luther, Martin, 36, 339
lyricism, 224, 242

Mabillon, Jean, 19, 72
Mafalfa, 315
Malachy of Armagh, 10, 57, 193–196, 294, 322
mansio, 251
manuscript decoration, 302. *See also* Cîteaux, artistic legislation
house style, 282–284
portrayals of Bernard, 308–319
March, Ralph
Les origines du chant cistercien, 353
Margam, 199
De Maria numquam satis, 64n10
Marian theology, 64
Marienstern Lectionary
teaching scene in, 342–343

Maritain, Jacques
Distinguish to Unite; or, The Degrees of Knowledge, 359
Mariu Jartegnir, 331
Mark, Saint, 323
Marosszéki, Soloutor Rodolphe. *See* March, Ralph
Martin of Tours, 145
masses of Saint Bernard (Abbey of Gethsemani), 349
Matthew of Albano, 120
Maulbronn, 326
McGinn, Bernard, 108, 130, 252
McGuire, Brian Patrick, 119, 241
The Difficult Saint, 12, 21n16, 62n1, 239, 305
measure, 243–246
Meditations (William of Saint Thierry), 5, 124, 125
Mellifont, 10, 196
Melun, 136
Menard, Abbot, 325–326, 328
Merton, Thomas (Father Louis), 16, 98, 348
episode with *Témoignages*, 352
as Father Master, 350, 362
love for John of the Cross, 362, 363
teaching on Bernard, 355–356, 365
works on Bernard, 359–361, 367–368
Action and Contemplation in St Bernard, 360
St Bernard on Simplicity, 360
Metz, 353–354
Mews, Constant, 6
Migne, J.P., 19
Milan, 342
Mimesis (Erich Auerbach), 236
miracles, 18, 37, 45, 54, 60, 307
De Miraculis (Herbert of Clairvaux), 74, 325
Miramon, Charles de, 138n9
Mirror of History (Vincent of Bauvais), 343, 345
The Mirror of Charity (*Speculum caritatis*, Aelred of Rievaulx), 340
The Mirror of Faith (William of Saint Thierry), 127, 129
mitres, 341–342
Mohrmann, Christine, 224, 227, 246
Observations sur la langue et style de Saint Bernard, 222
monastic reform, 65, 97–99, 119–122, 139, 155
monastic schooling, 134–135
monastic theology, 24, 33, 91–94
Monochrome Style (house style of Cîteaux), 283, 284–285, 308, 312
Monstra te esse matrem (inscription on *Lactation* images), 332
Montblanch, 330
Monte Cassino, 45
Moos, Peter von, 12, 221, 237–238
Consolatio, 240
Moralia in Job, 141, 283, 285, 287
Mores, 191
Morigny
Chronicle of, 151
Morimond, 139
Morimondo, 317
Moro, Aldo, 227
Moses, 262–263, 264
murmur, 262, 263
The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard (Etienne Gilson), 20, 224, 251–252, 349
mysticism, 92, 102, 105, 106

On the Nature of the Body and the Soul (William of Saint Thierry), 126
The Nature and Dignity of Love (William of Saint Thierry), 124, 129
In nativitate Domini, 270n60
New Monastery (Cîteaux), 26–27, 29, 304
Nicholas V, 345
Nicholas (candidate abbot, Trois Fontaines), 202
Nicolas of Montieramey, 59
Nivard (brother of Bernard), 22, 27, 28, 199
Noirlac, 179, 197
novices, 185–188
novitiate, 26–28, 136, 139, 281, 283, 285, 298, 300

Oberschönenfeld, 326
Observations sur la langue et style de Saint Bernard (Christine Mohrmann), 222
occulta cordis, 221
Oger of Mount Saint Eloi, 117n53
Olier, Jean-Jacques, 370
omnipotence, 162, 163, 164, 165
Opera Sancti Bernardi (Leclercq and Rochais), 20
Opuscula (Augustine of Hippo), 297n72
Order of Cîteaux, 31, 140n15, 288
Order of the Knights Templar, 38, 53

Orderic Vitalis, 306
ordinatio caritatis, 99, 102
Origin, 141, 145, 357
Les origines des chant cistercian (Ralph March), 353
Otto of Freising, 56, 122, 166, 306
Ovid, 141

paintings
  portrayals of Bernard in, 288, 319–320
Palestine, 35, 38, 53, 58
Palma, Majorca, 330, 331
papal schism (Innocent II vs Anacletus), 18, 40–42, 45, 46, 95n81, 115, 193
the *Parables*, 13, 66, 102–104, 107, 261, 262
the Paraclete, 7, 144, 148, 151, 151–152, 153–154, 249
Paradiso (Dante), 335
paradisus claustralis, 13, 243, 251, 255
Paris, 155
passion imagery, 328–329, 335
pastoral care, 11, 78–80, 104, 207–215
Patrologia latina, 54
patrons, 189
Paul, *Letter to the Romans*, 359
Paul of Thebes, 350
Paul VI, 227, 246, 248
Pepin, 295
peregrini, 13, 264, 265, 267–268, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278
persona, 12, 226, 227, 233, 234, 236, 237–243, 246
personality, 62, 74–78, 83, 305
Peter of Bruys, 51
Peter of Celles, 191
Peter Damian, 97
Peter de la Châtre, 50
Peter Lombard, 147
Peter the Venerable, 7, 46, 170, 188, 192, 204, 306, 362
  and Abelard, 7, 49, 167, 168, 306
  and Crusades, 55, 58
Pharaoh, 261–262, 263, 264
Philip (canon), 175–176, 259
Philip of Taranto, 214–215
philosophical inquiry, 371
Pieter van Os, 332, 334*ill.*
Pisa, 41
Pius XII
  Doctor Mellifluus, 361
Poblet, 315
poetry
  development of Christian, 223–224
political disputes
  involvement in, 3, 39–42, 48–52, 50, 51–52, 60
Pontigny, 139, 180
popularity, 305–306, 322–323, 346
Porion, Jean-Baptiste, 363
portrayals of Bernard
  on altarpieces, 320, 321*ill.*, 336
  the *Amplexus*, 64, 325–329, 327*ill.*, 335, 341, 341–342, 342, 346
  and the devil, 335–339, 337*ill.*
  Doctrina, 335
  evolution of style, 339–342, 345
  the *Lactation*, 15, 64, 329–335, 333*ill*, 334*ill.*, 336, 346
  in letters, 310, 311*ill.*, 318
  in manuscripts, 308–319, 309*ill*, 311*ill*, 314*ill.*, 316*ill*, 323, 324*ill*, 337*ill.*, 338–339, 341–343, 344*ill.*, 345–346
  on paintings, 320, 333*ill*
  on seal matrix, 315
  on stained glass windows, 320
  statues, 15, 320, 336
  in woodcuts, 334*ill.*, 338
Pranger, Burcht, 12–13, 253, 254
  Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought, 13
On Precept and Dispensation (*De Praecepto et Dispensatione*), 47, 98, 188, 217, 3186
pride
  steps of, 30–31, 254
Priscian
  Grammatical Institutes, 142–143
Pseudo-Odo of Cluny, 353
public affairs, 33–40, 67, 68, 72, 206, 305. *See also* Abelard, Peter; papal schism
  role in controversies and disputes, 3, 39–42, 45–46, 48–52, 50, 51–52, 60
  Second Crusade, 3, 38, 52–55, 64, 155, 292, 364
Puiseaux, 137–138

quotidianum, 152

Rabanus Maurus, 366
Rainald of Foigny, 81, 185, 207, 210–211
In ramis palmarum, 270n61
Rancé, Armond-Jean de, 369–370
Raoul de Vermandois, 50
Raoul (Rodolfus), 53, 357, 358
ratio, 275, 354
Raynard de Bar, 206, 285, 308n16

reading Bernard, 240–241, 349, 360, 366, 367
reason, 129–130, 131–132, 134, 354, 368, 370
Receuil d'études sur Saint Bernard et ses écrits (Jean Leclercq), 222
recruitment, 8–9, 147, 172–192, 188, 216, 217, 259
redamare, 100
Redemption, 2, 162, 163, 164
regio dissimilitudinis, 13, 251
Regulae de arte musica (anonymous), 354
Reilly, Diane J., 14
Reims, 122n86, 146, 342
Renard de Bar. *See* Raynard de Bar
In resurrectione sermo, 247–248
Reynald of Morimont, 53
Rhetorica ad Herennium, 143
rhetorical skills, 225, 233, 240, 248
Rhineland, 51, 53, 54, 55, 328, 332, 357
Richard of Fountains, 201
Ricuin of Toul, 181
Rievaulx, 173, 189, 194, 205
Rignano, 193
Rinaldo of Monte Cassino, 214
Robert of Arbrissel, 145
Robert of Basevorn, *The Form of Preaching*, 5, 89, 225, 226, 233, 243, 248
Robert (brother of Bernard), 196
Robert (candidate abbot, Trois Fontaines), 202–203
Robert of Châtillon, 9, 22, 34–35, 120n70, 177, 178–179
Robert of Dunes, 208, 212
Robert of Molesme, 10, 198, 281
Roby, Douglas, 363
Rochais, Henri, 17, 171, 216
Opera Sancti Bernardi, 20
Rodolfus (Raoul), 53, 357, 358
Roger II of Sicily, 10, 41, 42, 45–46, 54, 193, 195, 196
Romanus, 174
Roscelin of Compiègne, 135–136, 145, 156
Rualene of Saint Anastasius, 214, 216
Rudolph, Conrad, 14, 287, 289
Rufinus, 141
Rule for the Paraclete, 154
Rule of Saint Augustine, 177–178
Rule of Saint Benedict, 3, 30, 47, 95, 97, 98, 148, 153, 300
strict adherence to, 281n6, 282, 304
and *transitus*, 178, 179–185
Runciman, Steven, 364
Rupert of Deutz, 142, 227–228
De divinis officiis, 126

De sacramentis (Hugh of Saint Victor), 155, 156, 157
On the Sacrament of the Altar (William of Saint Thierry), 126
Sacrosancta Romana, 205
Saint Anastasius, 197, 210, 214
Saint Augustine, 308
Saint Ayoul, 154
St Bernard on Interior Simplicity (Thomas Merton), 360
Saint Bernard Mystique (Jean Leclercq), 364
Saint Bernard Office, 365–366
Saint Bertin, 197–198
Saint Denis, 145, 148, 149, 155, 295–296, 361
Saint Francis (Palma, Majorca), 320, 321*ill.*, 322, 330, 336
Saint Germer, 181–183
Saint Gildas, 148
Saint Gilles, Count of, 51
Saint Mark, 319
Saint Mary, 198
Saint Medard, 146
Saint Michael, 320
Saint Nicaise, 109, 112
Saint Nicasius, 140
Saint Peter, 42
Saint Servaas, 340
Saint Thierry, 120
Saint Urbain, 317
Saint Victor, 72, 137, 138, 139–140, 142, 155
Saint Vincent, 197
Saint Vorles, 122, 331
Saint-Vaast, 282
Sainte Geneviève, 137, 138, 155
Salerno, 45
salvation, 251, 255, 256–257, 276
Samson of Reims, 162, 167
San Nicholas de Mottafilocastro, 196
Sant' Anselmo, 357
Santa Maria (Aracoeli), 319
Santa Maria Maggiore (Rome), 336
Savigny, 56, 192, 194
Scandinavia, 10, 192
Schmitt, Father, 170
Scourmont, 364

scriptorium of Cîteaux, 281–285, 302, 307, 312
sculptures, 287, 319
Second Crusade, 3, 38, 52–55, 58, 64, 155, 292, 364
Second Lateran Council, 48, 121n82, 160, 214
Second Style (house style of Cîteaux), 282
self-accusation, 246
self-deprecation, 67–68
self-knowledge, 104, 371
the self, 221–222, 237, 243, 245
De Senectute (Cicero), 174
Sens
  Council of, 6, 7, 48, 122, 134, 159, 161, 166–167, 168
Sentences (*Sententiae*), 90, 107, 254
sententie (Anselm of Laon), 141
Sententie de divinitate (Hugh of Saint Victor), 156
Sententie Florianenses (Peter Abelard), 157
Sententie magristri Petri Abaelardi (Peter Abelard), 157
Sententie Parisienses (Peter Abelard), 157
sententie (William of Champeaux), 141, 166
Sept-Fons, 360
In Septuagesima, 255, 259, 260n30
Sergent, Tyler, 6
sermo
  Cistercian, 4, 85–91
Sermo in anniversario obitus S. Bernardi (Geoffrey of Auxerre), 79–81
sermons (Bernard of Clairvaux), 36, 74–75, 86, 90, 319, 343
  Advent, 87, 88–89, 356–357
  In ascencione, 12, 233–234, 256n19, 355–356
  In assumptione Mariae, 277
  De conversione, 90, 160
  In dedicatione ecclesiae, 263, 277
  De diversis, 66, 90, 252, 255, 259, 271
  In epiphania domini sermo, 266–267
  In resurrectione sermo, 247–248
  In nativitate Domini, 270n60
  In ramis palmarum, 270n61
  In Septuagesima, 255, 259, 260n30
  The Sermons on the Song of Songs (Sermo super Cantica Canticorum), 3, 20, 32, 45, 83, 89, 99, 102, 107, 230–231, 300, 349
    Sermon *1*, 318
    Sermon *6*, 277
    Sermon *14*, 301
    Sermon *23*, 254, 255, 271–272
    Sermon *26*, 4, 12, 13, 46, 76–78, 238–243, 267–268, 273–274
    Sermon *27*, 274
    Sermon *31*, 268–269
    Sermon *33*, 250
    Sermon *39*, 263
    Sermon *43*, 328
    Sermon *50*, 255
    Sermon *51*, 273
    Sermon *53*, 272
    Sermon *57*, 273
    Sermon *65*, 51
    Sermon *66*, 51
    Sermon *74*, 255
    Sermon *76*, 274
    Sermon *79*, 357, 358–359
  style of, 86–87, 88–89, 220
  Super psalmum Qui habitat, 255
Sermons (Isaac of Stella), 82
Seven verses of Bernard, 337*ill.*
sexual temptation, 25–26
Sic et Non (Peter Abelard), 144, 150, 151, 156, 157, 161
Sicily, 10
sick
  care for the, 80–81
Signer, Michael, 357
Signy, 114, 120n73, 126
Simeon of Durham, 142
simony, 39, 49–50
simplicity, 339, 340, 341, 359, 360
Sint Pieterskerk, 336
Sitz-im-Leben, 273
skills, 69–71
Slavs, 55
Smalley, Beryl, 23
Soissons
  Council of, 120, 136, 146, 159, 165
Solesmes, 353
Sommerfeldt, John, 16–17, 123
Song of Songs, 141. *See also* sermons, *The Sermons on the Song of Songs*
Soulèvre, 199
Spain, 192
Speculum caritatis (The Mirror of Charity, Aelred of Rievaulx), 303, 310
spirituality, 65, 91, 95, 97, 128–132, 285–286, 361–363
stained glass windows, 319, 320, 326
statues of Bernard, 15, 320, 336
Stephen of Blois, 49

Stephen of Garland, 6, 39, 136, 137, 149, 155, 160
Stephen Harding, 11, 14, 26, 29, 72, 140n15, 154, 204
  Bernard vs, 14, 35, 281n6, 287
  Carta caritatis, 31, 36, 205, 213
  and Cistercian liturgy, 154
  and manuscript illumination, 284, 286, 307, 308
Stephen Harding Bible, 283, 285, 287, 300, 301–302
Stephen of Palestrina, 159
Stephen of Senlis, 155
The Steps of Humility and Pride (De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae), 3, 30, 98, 103, 107, 254, 268, 275, 308, 310, 313
Stiegman, Emero, 123, 130
Suger of Saint Denis, 7, 50, 55, 59, 151, 167, 197, 205
  De administratione, 304
  De consecratione, 304
  reforming abbey of Saint Denis, 14, 39, 149, 155, 295–296
Super psalmum Qui habitat, 255
supersubstantialem, 152
Synagoga, 301–302
Synod of Reims, 122n86

Talbot, C.H.
  De anima, 349–350
Taranto, 214
Tart, 195
Témoignages (journal), 352
Teresa of Avila, 362
Tescelin (father of Bernard), 22
Theobald, Archdeacon, 155
Theobald of Blois (Theobald of Champagne), 18n3, 50, 191, 193, 203
Theologia Christiana (Peter Abelard), 148, 150, 151
Theologia (Peter Abelard), 7, 120, 156, 159, 161, 162, 165, 166, 167–168
Theologia 'Scholarium' (Peter Abelard), 151, 156, 157, 158, 162–163, 164, 166
Theologia 'Summi boni' (Peter Abelard), 145
Thomas Aquinas, 360
Thomas Becket, 307
Thomas of Beverley, 173, 174–175, 179, 184
Thomas of Canterbury, 323
Thomas of Marle, 172
Thomas of Morigny, 121, 121–122n82, 165–166
Thomas (prior of Saint Victor), 155
Thomas of Saint Omer, 184
Thorald, Abbot of Fountains, 203
Thurstan, Archbishop of York, 49, 198
Timmermann, Waltraud, 264
Toldanos, 199
tomb of Bernard, 320
topographical register, 252–253, 254–256, 276–278
topoi, 203–204, 251, 253–254, 256–257, 264, 276
Tractatus contra capitula errorum Petri Abaelardi, 48
transitus, 179–185, 186, 188
translations, 64, 84, 171, 322–323, 348, 349, 351, 358
travels, 118–119
  in Aquitaine, 18, 40, 42, 51, 55
  in Italy, 3, 18, 40–42, 44–46, 200–201, 204, 208
  in Rhineland, 54, 55
Tre Fontane, 51
Trinity, 159, 162–163, 163, 164, 165
Trois Fontaines, 30, 139, 195, 202, 211
Tronc Berenger, 187

Ulger of Angers, 156n48
University of Michigan, 369
University of Paris, 8

Vacandard, Elphege, 2, 4, 21, 126n112, 220, 224
Vaucelles, 190
Vaux, 205
veneration, 306, 307
Verbaal, Wim, 167, 273n70
verbum abbreviatum, 270
Verses of Bernard, 338–339
Vezelay, 53
via regia, 269–270, 272, 273
viatores, 13, 17, 268, 269, 275, 276, 278
Victor IV, 46
Vincent of Bauvais
  The Mirror of History, 343, 345
virtues, 83, 102–104
visions, 24, 30, 36, 43, 296, 322
The Vision of Mary, 335
visitations, 200, 203, 205, 206
Vita prima Bernardi, 23, 114, 127, 306, 322, 323
  authors and books of, 18–19, 67
  on Clairvaux, 70, 116, 209

(Continued)
on death of Bernard, 60
on effect on people, 19
on encounters with the devil, 336
on friendship with William of Saint Thierry, 110n12, 116–117, 124
on involvement in controversies, 18, 19, 40, 42, 317
on miracles, 18, 54
Patrologia latina, 54
portrayals of Bernard in, 312, 313–314, 314ill., 340
on practical skills of Bernard, 12, 215
on refusing bishoprics, 342
Vita Quarta (John the Hermit), 19, 22
Vita St. Malachy, 57
Vita Secunda (Alan of Auxerre), 19
Vita Tertia (Geoffrey of Auxerre), 19
Vitae sanctorum, 282, 299–300
Viterbo, 45, 76, 274
Vulgate Bible, 24, 105

Waddell, Chrysogonus, 16, 31n71, 72n34, 140n15, 153, 154, 206, 288, 373
novitiate of, 348–351
Walter of London, 49
Walter of Mortagne, 157
Western Michigan University, 2, 15, 356–357, 363
Wettingen, 326
William X, 203
William, Count, 42
William of Aquitaine, 317–318
William of Champeaux, 157, 177
and Abelard, 6, 122, 135, 142, 146, 163
and Bernard, 6, 31, 110, 135, 140, 143, 145, 166, 172
and ecclesiastical reform, 136, 139
Moralia, 141
at Puiseaux, 137–138
at Saint Victor, 137, 138
sententie, 141, 166
William of Conches, 122
William Fitzherbert, 49, 50, 212
William of Malmesbury, 329
William (novice at Clairvaux), 181
William of Rievaulx, 8, 173, 201, 202, 205, 212
William of Saint Thierry, 38, 108n1, 109, 131, 211
abbacies of, 109, 110n12, 111, 112, 113, 114, 120n73, 126
on Aleth de Montbard, 22–23, 24–25, 330
on ascetic regime of Bernard, 33–34
on Clairvaux, 29, 32, 113, 114n35, 115, 120, 293–294
Commentarius in Cantica canticorum e Scriptis Ambrosii collectus, 126n107
On Contemplating God, 124
The Enigma of Faith, 127
Excerpta in libris S. Gregorii papae super Cantica canticorum, 126n107
Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos, 126n108
Exposition on the Song of Songs, 116, 126n109, 129
friendship with Bernard, 5–6, 116–119
The Golden Epistle, 6, 127
influence on Bernard, 117, 122, 123, 147, 158, 159, 161, 162
Life of William, 109
on love, 128–130, 141, 144, 159
on material excesses, 119–120, 280n2. *See also Apologia to Abbot William*
Meditations, 5, 124, 125
meeting Bernard, 110, 111, 111n18, 113, 122, 124–125, 126, 139, 140–141
The Mirror of Faith, 127, 129
and monastic reform, 119–122
on monastic conversion of Bernard, 26–28
On the Nature of the Body and the Soul, 126
The Nature and Dignity of Love, 124, 129
on personality of Bernard, 67, 285
portrayals of, 108, 313
on reason, 129–130
role in Abelard conflict, 7, 48, 49, 120–122, 123, 126–127, 147, 158, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165
On the Sacrament of the Altar, 126
spirituality of, 128–132
Vita prima, 5, 12, 18, 108, 116, 285, 323
on William of Champeaux and Bernard, 140, 143, 145
as writer, 123–127
Williams, Watkin, 8, 40
Wilmart, Dom André, 125
Windberg, 313
Winterbach, 195
wisdom, 91, 104
Wladislaus of Bohemia, 292

women
attitude towards, 25, 27
Wonnental, 326, 328
woodcuts
portrayals of Bernard in, 332, 334*ill.*, 338
works, 221. *See also* letters; sermons
Apologia to Abbot William, 14, 34, 67, 98, 119, 123, 279–281, 280n3, 284, 286–287, 288–290, 291, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 303–304, 307, 308n16, 340
Five Books on Consideration, 14, 58, 291–292, 345
In Praise of the New Knighthood, 291
In Praise of the Virgin Mother, 107, 292, 299
On Grace and Free Choice, 123
On Loving God (De diligendo Deo), 99, 107, 128, 225–226
On Precept and Dispensation, 47, 98, 188, 217, 318
the *Parables*, 13, 66, 102–104, 107, 249, 261, 262
Sentences (Sententiae), 90, 107, 254
The Steps of Humility and Pride (De Gradibus Humilitatis et Superbiae), 3, 30, 98, 103, 107, 254, 268, 275, 308, 310, 313
Tractatus contra capitula errorum Petri Abaelardi, 48
Vita St. Malachy, 57
writing style, 62–63, 92, 215–216, 357
humour in, 66–67, 289
literary qualities, 220–221, 242
literary techniques, 224, 225–226, 233, 248, 251, 252
translating Bernard, 84
Wulfric (hermit), 95n81

Yevtushenko, Yevgeny
Zima Junction, 347, 368

Zaluska, Yolanta, 14, 284, 286–287, 299
Zealand, 59
Zima Junction (Yevgeny Yevtushenko), 347, 368
Zwettl, 313, 318